

BUSINESS / BI

Heavy losses on Wall Street spark selling spree; RP stocks post biggest loss in 5 years

METRO / A25

E-payment for MRT, LRT trains eyed

NEWS / A24

Filipina convicted in S'pore of chop-chop slay of fellow OFW

WORLD / A29

US Senate backs citizenship for illegal immigrants with 2-year residency

Skeptical Emata pal now looking for 'lechon' money

By the PDI Mindanao, Visayas and Southern Luzon Bureaus

DAVAO CITY—A CLOSE FRIEND OF ERWIN "Pastor" Emata's yesterday said he would now have to find the wherewithal to produce a roast pig to celebrate the latter's successful climb of Mt. Everest.

Admitting that he had been skeptical that Emata

SKEPTICAL/A21

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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No shame in being called GMA lapdog but ...

By Philip C. Tubeza

DAVAO DEL SUR REP. Douglas Casas says he feels no shame about being called a lapdog of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But he says he also would not hesitate to join



NO SHAME/A22



THAT TOWERING FEELING: Erwin "Pastor" (the nickname for praying every step of the way) Emata summits the world's highest mountain at 5:24 a.m. Nepal time (7:24 a.m. Philippine time) on May 18. And so it has come to pass the past week that the Filipinos ever in urgent search of heroes have found new exciting role models in mountaineers Leo Oracion and Emata.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO OF EMATA TRAINING AT MOUNT AYMERIN IN NEW ZEALAND IN MARCH 2005

Second Filipino conquers Everest

Garduce expected to reach summit tomorrow

By Alcuin Papa

BARELY 24 HOURS AFTER LEO ORACION ANNOUNCED that "the Philippine eagle has landed" on the summit of Mt. Everest, a second Filipino made quick work of the ascent.

Erwin "Pastor" Emata, a native of Davao, left Everest's Camp 4 (8,000 meters or 26,000 feet) on Wednesday at 9:35 p.m. Nepal time (11:35 p.m. in Manila) and made it to the peak of the world's highest mountain in just seven hours and 49 minutes with the aid of oxygen.

He made it yesterday at 5:24 a.m. Nepal time (7:24 a.m. in

Manila), or four hours ahead of schedule.

Both Oracion and Emata are members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPME). From Camp 4, Oracion reached the peak in 15 hours.

Pemba Dorje Sherpa of Nepal set the record for the fastest ascent from Everest's Base Camp to the summit at eight hours

and 10 minutes on May 21, 2004.

Oracion and Emata, both 32, are now at Camp 2 (6,400 meters or 21,000 feet) where the FPME had stocked food and equipment. At noon today, they are expected to reach Base Camp (5,400 meters or 17,700 feet) and to partake of a special meal prepared by other FPME members.

Upon reaching the summit, Emata immediately radioed FPME expedition leader Arturo Valdez at Base Camp.

His first words were "It's so cold here," Valdez reported in a radio interview.

Emata, who was among 60 other climbers mostly from Spain, was the first in the group to make it to the top.

"Pastor's time is really above average," Butch Sebastian, coleader of the FPME expedition, told the INQUIRER.

"He is really a strong climber," Sebastian said, adding:

"Our preparations and training really helped. He had an early start, so he was able to get ahead of his group. Also, he is in great condition, and he had a lot of determination."

Sebastian also noted that unlike Oracion who had to deal with

SECOND/A21

City of Manila bans 'Da Vinci Code'

By Tina G. Santos

MOVIEGOERS IN MANILA MAY have to go to neighboring cities to watch "The Da Vinci Code" after the city council yesterday passed a resolution prohibiting the showing of the controversial movie.

The resolution said the movie, which was based on US author Dan Brown's explosive novel, "is undoubtedly offensive and contrary to established religious beliefs which cannot take precedence over the right of the persons involved in the film to freedom of expression."

The resolution, which was passed just hours before cinemas in Manila and other parts of the metropolis began showing the movie, cited a provision in the Revised Penal Code that made it a crime to exhibit films which offend a religion."

Councilor Rolando Valeriano, one of the authors of the resolution, said the ban would take effect today after theater owners in Manila shall have been furnished copies of the measure.

The film's premise that Jesus



MEGA BILLBOARD of the most controversial film in recent memory appears to be moving along with a bus on Edsa, and may be on its road to perdition as it opens across Asia on Thursday to lamentations and the gnashing of teeth.

'A thriller, not a historical document'

By Paul Daza

AT A PACKED SCREENING YESTERDAY of "The Da Vinci Code" in Cubao, Quezon City, there was an audible gasp from the audience during one scene. This was when Holy Grail expert Leigh Teabing, played by actor Ian McKellen, stated that Mary

Magdalene was pregnant with Jesus Christ's child as He was being crucified. Teabing added that the Catholic Church had been covering this up for years because if word got out, people would see Jesus Christ as a mere man and Christianity would collapse.

Is all the fuss over the movie

version of Dan Brown's controversial book warranted?

"The Da Vinci Code" stars Tom Hanks as Robert Langdon, a Harvard symbologist who gets drawn into a search for the Holy Grail when he's implicated in a murder at the Louvre Museum in Paris. Accompanied by Sophie Neveu (Audrey

DA VINCI/A22

Third Filipino climber on track for 1-2-3 finish

By Luige A. del Puerto and Tony S. Bergonia

ROMI GARDUCE REACHED Camp 4 on Mt. Everest yesterday afternoon and will push on toward the summit at 8 p.m., Nepal time, according to his local contacts.

"Romi reached Camp 4 at 1:55 p.m. Nepal time (3:55 p.m. in Manila)," said Ramir Ortega, head of GMA 7's News and Public Affairs

and Corporate Publicity. "He says the wind is getting stronger, compared to the last two days."

Ortega dismissed a report that Garduce had been struck with fever, which was why he was lagging behind fellow mountaineers Leo Oracion and Erwin "Pastor" Emata.

"I don't think that's true," Ortega said. "Romi is OK. His summit assault starts tonight at 8

THIRD/A21

CITY OF MANILA/A23

OPUS DEI IN RP

'Secular mentality but following Church agenda'

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

(Conclusion)

A SECULAR MENTALITY. THIS IS what an Opus Dei member should have when doing God's work, Jesus Estanislao, a noted economist and Opus Dei numerary, stresses again and again. It is a Christian spirituality for ordinary people aiming for personal sanctification.

"We do not use our affiliation with Opus Dei and come out as one on an issue," he says.

Members do not necessarily share the same views, Estanislao says. They are mostly stand-alone decision-makers, each one acting according to his or

her own lights. Prayer, study, reflection and the teachings of the church help them navigate through the secular.

A former finance secretary, Estanislao chairs the Institute of Corporate Directors. He is also the president and CEO of the Institute for Solidarity in Asia. This is one way of pursuing the Opus Dei calling and "the agenda of the church" in the world.

"Where the church pushes the cart," Estanislao says, "we push our cart in that same direction."

Today there are approximately 3,000 Opus Dei members in the Philippines, both male (70 priests among them) and female.

SECULAR/A10

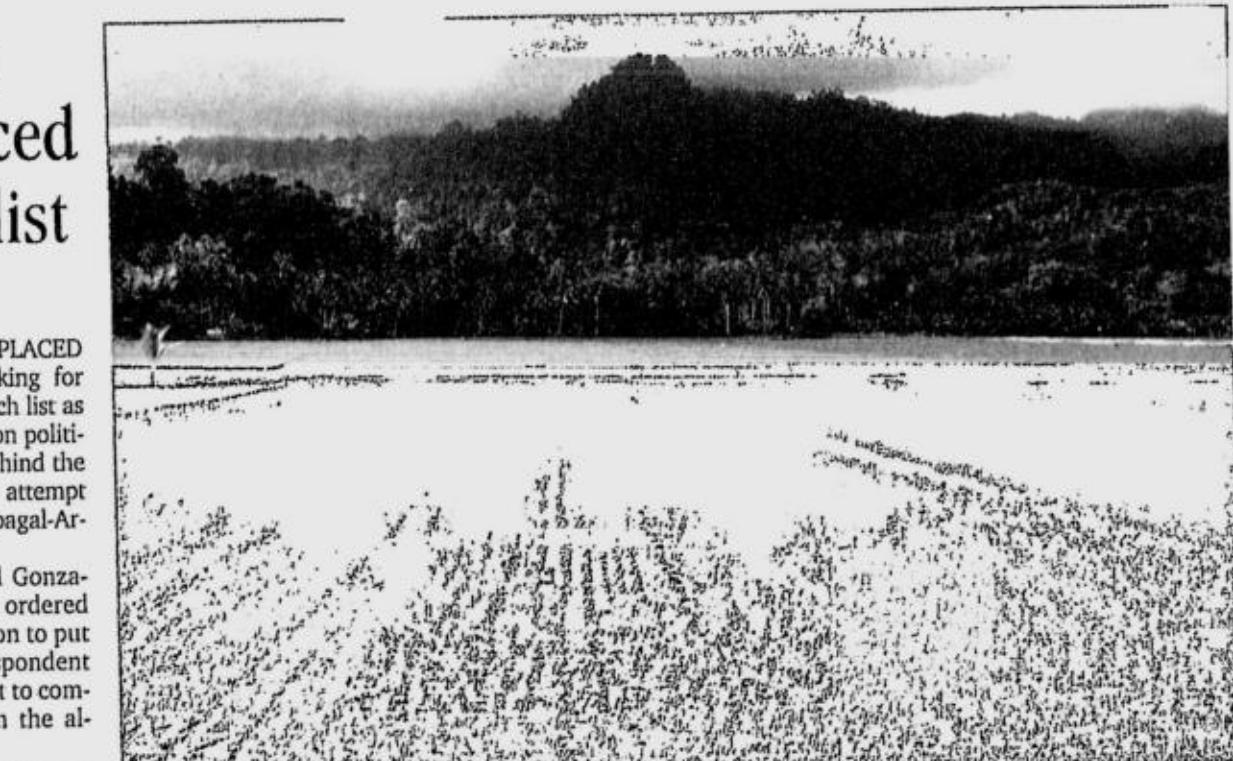
Time mag writer placed on watch list

By Armand N. Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT HAS PLACED a Filipino journalist working for Time magazine on its watch list as it deepens its crackdown on politicians and businessmen behind the alleged Feb. 24 coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said he had ordered the Bureau of Immigration to put Time's Philippine correspondent Nelly Sindayen on the list to compel her to shed light on the alleged plot.

Sindayen earlier coauthored an article in the international



POETRY RECOLLECTED in the tranquility of the yellow-green expanse of a ricefield framed by a mountain forest in Kiambu town, Sarangani province.

AQUILES ZONIO/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

TIME/A23

RP seaman in Queen Mary 2 killing of fellow Pinoy now in police custody

THE OFFICERS OF LUXURY LINER Queen Mary 2 have turned over to British police the Filipino crewman accused of killing a co-worker compatriot while the ship

was still in the high seas on May 12, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

Rodolfo Juangca, 49, was held at the Lyndhurst police station in

Hampshire shortly after the QM2 docked at her home port in Southampton, England, on May 17, the DFA said.

DFA spokesman Bert Asuque said

the body of the victim, crewman Joel Tagaan, was still being kept in a hospital morgue in the coastal town of Groeningen, the Netherlands.

Tagaan died of serious head in-

juries while being airlifted to that town for treatment, following a "fight" with Juangca, according to earlier reports from the Philippine Embassy in London.

The fight took place below deck at the ship's rest and recreation area, and was reportedly witnessed by other Filipino and foreign crew members.



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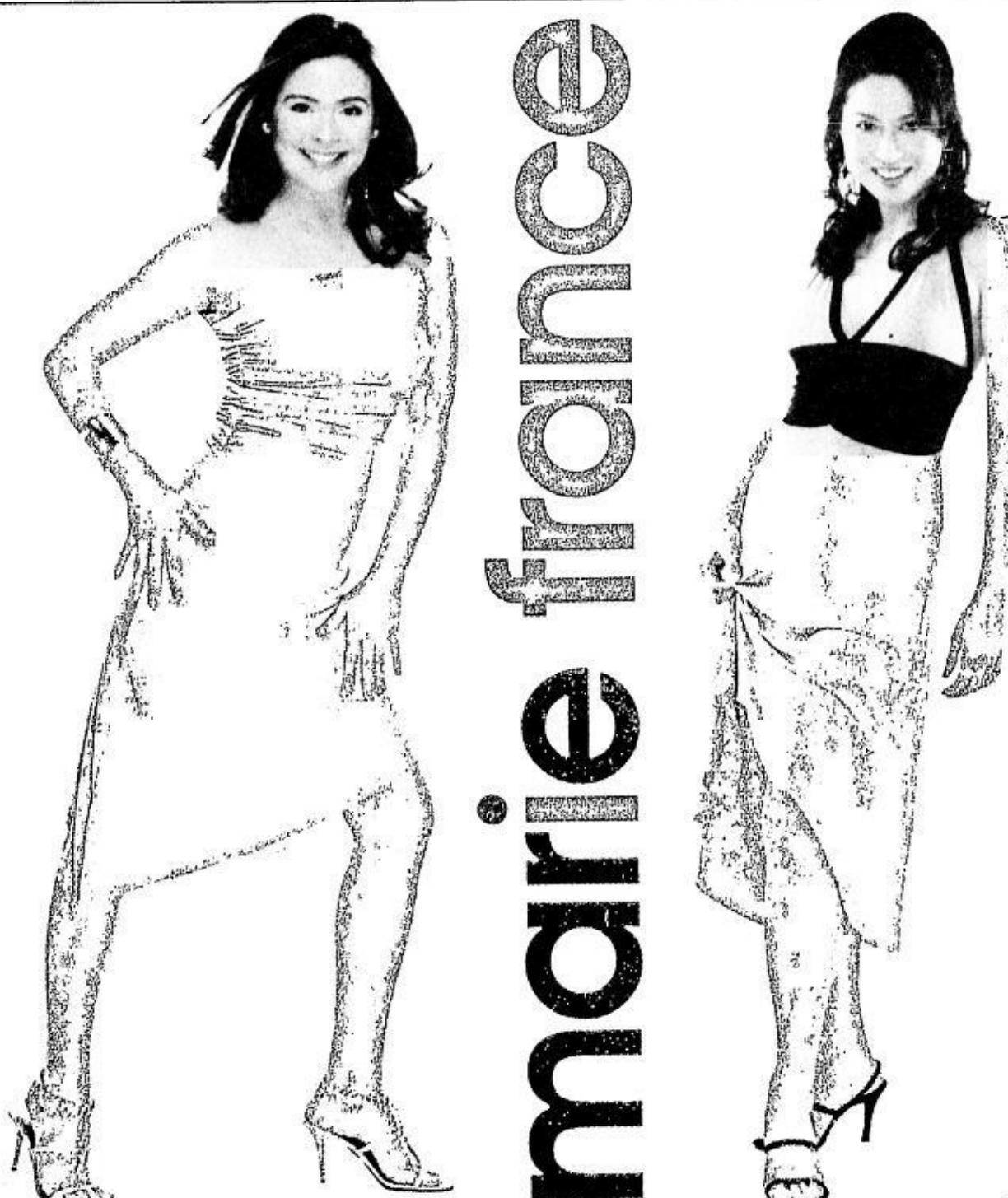
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Budget surplus to help ease oil crunch

By Christine O. Avendaño

ELATED OVER THE P17.6-BILLION budget surplus, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday some of the money would go toward promoting alternative fuels to ease the burden of high oil prices.

The President said more jatropha trees, whose seeds are a source of biodiesel, would be planted and stoves fueled by plant oils would be produced on a massive scale.

The President presided over a demonstration of how effective jatropha, also known as *tuba* and *sambo*, was as a substitute for diesel and on the use of plant oils as an alternative to the more expensive liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

"We want to use the money to make life better for those suffering from the high oil prices," the Presi-

dent said in Malacañang.

In a statement she read, Ms Arroyo also thanked the government bureaucracy for "keeping spending down and public service efficiency up at a time when the people are valiantly carrying the burden of tough fiscal reforms besides the surge of world oil prices."

The government posted a P17.6-billion budget surplus in April, five times higher than the surplus it posted a year earlier.

Ms Arroyo said the government had initially allotted P500 million for the planting of jatropha in military camps and for research on its "highest yielding species."

As for the plant oil stove, the President said she would support its "mass production and distribute some samples to 18 hot-spot urban poor communities."

"I just want to make sure it's encouraging on a bigger scale," Neri said, noting that the tests "will tell us how viable

Jun Lozada, president of Philippine Forest Corp., told the President jatropha nurseries had been put up in military bases like Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija and Camp Aquino in Tarlac.

At present, the government has 150,000 hectares planted to jatropha, while the private sector has three times the land planted to the tree, Lozada said.

Actually, the government was still testing jatropha, according to National Economic Development Authority (Neda) chair Romulo Neri, who added that he did not want to encourage the private sector to come in at this time until the government had documented the results of its experience in the military camps.

"I just want to make sure it's encouraging on a bigger scale," Neri said, noting that the tests "will tell us how viable

it is on a commercial scale."

For now, the country's oil import bill stood at \$7 billion and 20 or 25 percent of this was for diesel, Neri said.

The plant oil stove, meanwhile, currently costs P2,300 but Neri said its inventors, a team from the Leyte State University, were studying how to bring down its cost.

Neri said the stove was economical because it used vegetable, coconut and regular cooking oil.

In yesterday's demonstration by Dr. Robert Guarte, dean of the LSU College of Engineering and Agri-Industries, the stove was made to run on coconut oil.

Guarte said the stove could operate for 10-12 hours using only three liters of oil. He said they had tested jatropha oil on the stove and it worked as well.

The stove is currently available in Leyte but will be mass produced by next year, Guarte said.



PRESIDENT Arroyo and Neda chair Romulo Neri watch the plant oil stove in operation.

Labor chief clarifies ban on tourist workers to UAE

By Jerome Aning

LABOR SECRETARY PATRICIA STO. TOMAS yesterday clarified that the government was not considering implementing a total or a partial ban on the deployment of documented overseas Filipino workers to the United Arab Emirates.

"What we are against, consistently, is illegal recruitment that lures would-be OFWs to enter the host country as undocumented migrants without proper protection, which makes them vulnerable and prone to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse," she said.

The labor department earlier warned Filipinos going to UAE with visit visas from seeking employment in the territory without proper documentation and permits.

Reports abound about so-called Filipino "tourist workers" being underpaid and abused by unscrupulous employers.

Sto. Tomas said that the UAE was set to implement a law which sought to curb the trafficking of persons and children for profit.

Sto. Tomas said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in UAE's capital Abu Dhabi reported that a draft of the law had been referred to the country's justice ministry for revision and approval.

She said that the law represented a milestone in the efforts to eradicate human trafficking and said its implementation would support steps being taken by the Philippines to check individuals and organizations who illegally recruit OFWs to the Middle East, using the Emirates as transit point.

Sto. Tomas said children, women, unskilled workers, and jobseekers posing as tourists offered vulnerable targets for trafficking rings. She said that human trafficking and people smuggling had been raking in huge profits.

The UAE remains the third-favored destination of documented OFWs, next to the Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

The number of documented OFWs that have been deployed to the UAE, considered as the Hong Kong of the Middle East, reached 81,707 in 2005, representing a growth of 19.48 percent from the 68,386 OFWs in the Emirates in 2004.

Sto. Tomas called attention to a report of the United Nations' Office on Drug and Crime which said that human trafficking, wherein people are abducted or recruited across countries for forced labor, prostitution, and other manipulative activities, had become a global phenomenon.

UNDOC defines trafficking in persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of threat, coercion, abduction, and fraud or deception for sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, and the removal of organs.

It also involves the giving or receiving of payments to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person.

Corrections

IN THE MAY 3 ISSUE, a story on Page A12—"Pinoy-Swiss strips down to shorts at Naia"—erroneously reported the nationality and country of residence of the man who stripped down to his underpants at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. The man, Silvio Ronga, is an Italian-Swiss—not Filipino-Swiss. He lives in Goteborg, Sweden—not Switzerland.

IN THE MAY 16 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Childless couples to join Obando fertility rites today"—misstated that the Obando fertility rites had been scheduled to start on that day. The Obando fertility rites are held every year from May 17 to 19.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirado, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR FROM ESA IS HOT, NEW FASHION RETAILER.

Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA) students have successful businesses before graduating college.

As a child, Mariel Rivera, was always fascinated with fashion but for most of her life it was just an interest. Last month, however, Mariel entered the fashion industry and had a soft launch of her own clothing line - ANGL (pronounced as Angel) at Robinsons Department Store in Ermita. Her brand's target markets are female teens and young females. In one month, ANGL has become part of the top 20 brands being sold by the store. And, the department store has already asked her to begin supplying to their other branches. Mariel's design philosophy is to design clothes she herself would like to wear- trendy, high end designs - but at prices less than what designer brands charge.

As a B.S. Entrepreneurship student in the Entrepreneurs School of Asia (ESA), Mariel not only acquired the business tools and knowledge but more importantly realized her passion and transformed it into a business. Armed with the entrepreneurial skills and mindset from ESA, she is now on her way to become the next big thing in Philippine fashion.

"I didn't really think I could have my own apparel business, and start succeeding, even before I graduated from college." Mariel Rivera, Student Entrepreneur

Taking on the responsibility of setting-up and managing their own business at such an early age makes ESA students more mature, decisive and confident. This gives them a clear advantage over their peers. Mariel Rivera is one of the 30 new student entrepreneur graduates of ESA for 2006

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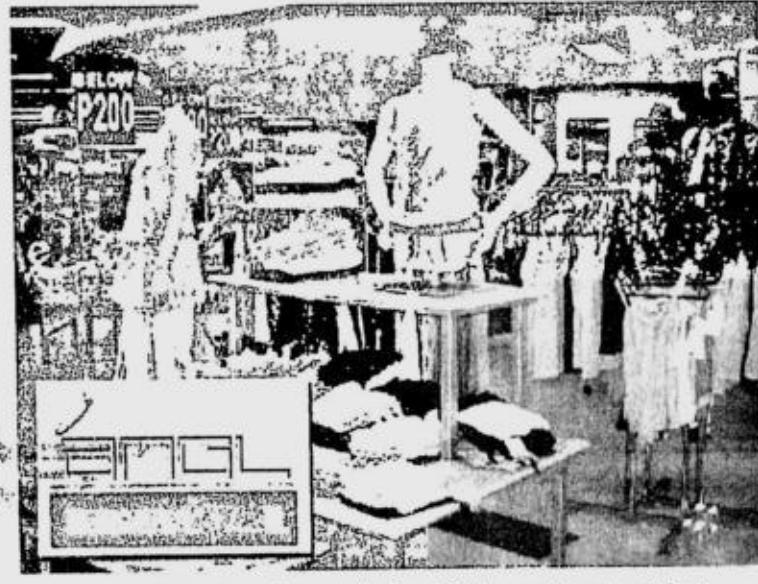
CHINA CAMPUS

The ESA opened its China campus last May 2006 in partnership with the Zhejiang Government in China. Located in Hangzhou City, the leisure capital of China. ESA will offer programs not only for college students but for entrepreneurs and executives as well.

Flexible Programs

ESA students have the option to do 1 or 2 terms in the China campus focusing on learning *How to do Business in China and Business Mandarin*.

The Entrepreneurs School of Asia is located at No. 27 Calle Industria, Libis, Quezon City with telephone numbers 638-1188 or 634-1286. For more information, visit the website at www.entrepreneur.edu.ph.



Mariel Rivera's products on display at Robinsons Department Store



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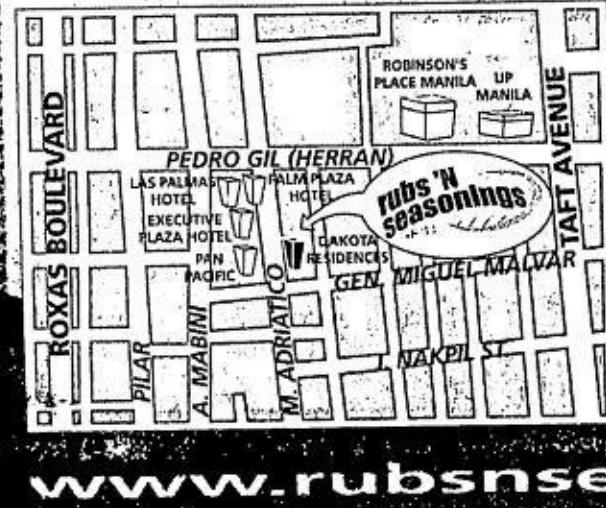
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By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY swore into office Napoleon Morales as permanent customs commissioner apparently as a reward for boosting his agency's collections in the last five months while in an acting capacity.

President Arroyo was impressed by the BOC's performance in the first four months of the year where it exceeded its goal by P3.659 billion and is on track of hitting its 2006 goal of P197 billion.

"I'm glad that you have met your target, congratulations, all the best," the President said during the ceremony.

Morales, who has been with the bureau for 38 years, starting as a messenger, was appointed acting customs commissioner in December last year largely on his sterling record at the Batangas port in place of Alexander Arevalo.

Morales is the first official customs commissioner since Alberto Lina resigned from office in July to join the Hyatt 10 which sought for the President's resignation.

Disappointed

The President, however, was disappointed with the performance of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the first four months that she personally called Revenue Commissioner Jose Marie Bunag ordering him to cut short his trip in Germany and come back immediately to explain his agency's woeful collections.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves has blamed the low remittances from the large taxpayers' unit (made up of the top 1,000 corporations) as more companies used tax credits to offset their tax liabilities this year.

Teves has ordered the BIR to verify whether the tax credits used were genuine and to make an inventory of all tax credits still in the market.

Presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor said that BOC personnel were set to enjoy a bonanza by yearend because of their strong collection. "I think a janitor at the BOC would get as much as P65,000 bonus if they continue their good job up to the end of the year," Defensor said.

In contrast, Defensor said the BIR lost a golden chance to get a windfall from their improved collection efforts this year after the agency incurred a P10 billion collection shortfall in April largely due to a steep drop in tax payments of top 1,000 corporations.

Poor performance

"It's really a pity because all of the BIR's regional district offices surpassed their collection targets. Only the Large Taxpayers Unit did them in because of its poor performance," said Defensor.

The President created a rewards and incentive fund and revenue performance evaluation board under Republic Act No. 9335 aimed at spurring the BIR and BOC to boost their collections.

If the BIR and BOC surpass their target by up to 30 percent, 15 percent of the excess collection would be funneled into a fund to be divided among members at the end of the year.

The regional district offices that surpass their targets can still get incentives (10 percent of their excess collections) if the BIR and BOC's total collections do not fall more than 10 percent of the target. The law also specifies that the evaluation board can sack BIR and BOC officials for failure to meet targets.

Domantay; 57

RODOLFO DIAZ DOMANTAY died on May 15 at 10:16 a.m. at the Manila Doctors Hospital. He was 57.

He remains lie at Jasper Chapel Dulce Memorial Homes, on Abad Santos and Diñalupihan Streets in Tondo, Manila. He is survived by wife Josefine; daughters Joyce, Roselle, Jocelyn, Renee, Joanna, and Rubee; brothers Jose and Arturo; and sisters Leticia, Socorro, Divina and Miner-va.

Interment will be on Sunday at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina.

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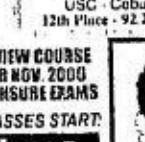
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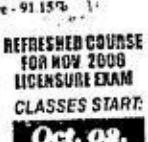
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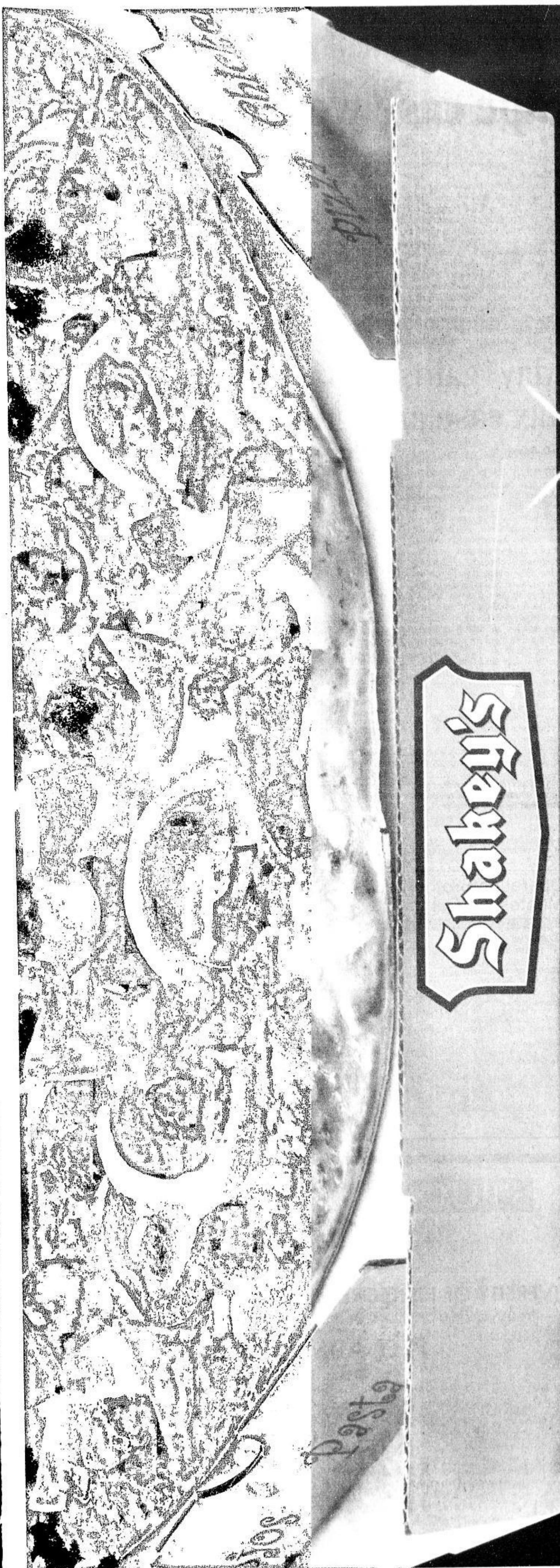
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REUTER

WEDGE IN RP-US TIES?

Subic rape case worries priest

By Nikko Dizon

A PROMINENT AMERICAN PRIEST who has served in the Philippines most of his life has expressed concern the controversial Subic rape case has been turned into a divisive issue between two allied nations.

Fr. James Reuter, S.J. told the INQUIRER in a recent interview that was how he and the four accused US Marines felt about the media reports on the case, as well as the continuing street protests staged by the militant feminist group Gabriela.

Reuter, who turns 90 on May 21, is the spiritual adviser of the Marines. He is practically considered to be a Filipino having been conferred honorary citizenship in

recognition of his long years of service to Philippine education, among other things.

"They feel the judgment is not against them so much, it's against the whole United States," Reuter said, referring to Staff Sgt. Chad Carpenter and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Dominic Duplantis and Keith Silkwood who stand accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman in the Subic Freeport in November last year.

The INQUIRER spoke with Reuter on Tuesday as he waited for the new papal nuncio, Archbishop Fernando Filoni, to arrive at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"That distresses me because they (the media and militant groups) are making it into an international issue,"

said Reuter, who is also the executive secretary of the local Catholic Church's National Office of Mass Media.

Reuter said the local media had been particularly "anti-American" in its reports about the rape case.

"They (the accused) feel that nothing is being said in their defense, and that all of the media is anti-American. Not against those four but against the United States," Reuter said.

Reuter said he continued to provide spiritual and moral support to the four men.

From the airport, he said he was going to the US Embassy to say Mass for Duplantis and Carpenter, who were both Catholic.

Aside from saying Mass, Reuter has also been conducting classes for the four on various subjects, like literature and ethics.

trial had officially begun, Reuter said.

He said the four Marines remained "stressed, strained and depressed" over their situation.

"They are tired of being in jail. They'd like to get out," Reuter said.

He said Carpenter was particularly anxious to see his wife and two young children in Okinawa, Japan, where the Marines are based.

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Aside from saying Mass, Reuter has also been conducting classes for the four on various subjects, like literature and ethics.

'Juday' gains reprieve in tax case arraignment

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE ARRAIGNMENT YESTERDAY OF MOVIE actress Judy Ann Santos on tax evasion charges was cancelled by the Court of Tax Appeals after she failed to show up, claiming lack of sufficient notice from the court.

CTA Presiding Justice Ernesto Acosta granted the request of Santos's lawyer, Bonifacio Alentajan, after the latter informed the court he only received the notice the day before the scheduled arraignment, short of the required three-day notice.

As such, Alentajan said, he was not able to relay the notice either to his client, who was taping a television series, or to her manager Alfie Lorenzo.

Alentajan also told the CTA he was filing a writ seeking a review of the case in the Court of Appeals in order to block the arraignment which was reset to May 23.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue had filed the case against Santos and the DOJ upheld the BIR's findings that Santos had incurred an income tax deficiency of P2.714 million in 2002.

On Jan. 13, 2006, Santos filed a motion to quash the case but this was dismissed by the CTA which found reasonable grounds to believe tax evasion had been committed.

Santos then filed a motion to reconsider her motion to quash but, again, this was rejected by the CTA.

The DOJ said it found no merit for a re-investigation of the case after preliminary investigation found the actress had failed to declare her combined income from the ABS-CBN television network, Viva Productions and Star Cinema in 2002.

According to the DOJ resolution dated Oct. 1, 2005, Santos had "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously" filed a false and fraudulent tax return for 2002 where she indicated a gross income of P8.033 million when her correct income was P16.396 million, a difference of P8.363 million.

But Alentajan said the information was inaccurate since BIR records would show that there was no notice of tax assessment and demand for payment sent to the actress.

"If there was no investigation, no assessment and no demand for payment of tax deficiency, how could this have ripened into a crime," Alentajan told reporters.

Alentajan said the BIR was only engaged in a "fishing expedition" when it said it was still investigating Santos's case and that any new evidence against her would be filed in court.

"Is that not a fishing expedition? Ihababla kita pero iimbestigahan pa kita (I'll sue you but I'll have to investigate you first?)" he said.



SANTOS

Vice gov says bishop in mining probe biased

THE VICE GOVERNOR OF ALBAY YES-TERDAY said the Catholic bishop heading the Rapu-Rapu Fact Finding Commission was a biased antimining advocate as such was not qualified to head the body.

Vice Governor James Calisin said in a press statement yesterday that he had the "smoking gun" showing that Bishop Arturo Bastes, who was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the Lafayette mining issue in Sorsogon, was openly antimining and violated his own rules against conflict of interest.

Lafayette, which operates the copper and gold mine in Rapu-Rapu island located off the eastern coast of Albay province, has been accused of spilling contaminated mining wastes into the region's waters. Lafayette has asked the government to allow test runs on its operations, but Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said he will not allow test runs until after the commission has submitted its findings.

"I have the video of Bishop Arturo Bastes of Sorsogon lambasting mining in general and accusing Lafayette of contaminating Sorsogon's fishes and waters without any scientific basis just several days before the President formed the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission where he is the chair," Calisin said.

Besides, Calisin said, the bishop himself said the members of his commission, under the rules he himself drafted, should demonstrate objectivity, neutrality and impartiality and should not have previously expressed any opinion for or against the Lafayette issue.

Conflict of interest

"With Bishop Bastes a vocal antimining advocate, he is now in a conflict of interest of his own making. How can we trust him if he breaks his own rules? How can we trust the commission's impartiality? With all due respect to the bishop, he is biased and he should not have been part of the commission from Day One," he said.

Calisin said a video taken on Feb. 17, Bastes went to the island of Rapu Rapu to warn the crowd about mining and Lafayette.

He quoted the bishop as saying: "...The seas of Sorsogon are dead because of mining, the effects of Lafayette mining. Our fish are no longer edible...I can no longer eat tangigue and malasugue and all the different kinds of fish because of what happened here in Rapu Rapu."

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY, through its MEZ Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract: Proposed Asphalt Overlay Project of MEZ-Phase II

Location: MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City

Brief Description: Supply of Labor, Materials, Equipment and Supervision for Proposed Asphalt Overlay Project of MEZ-Phase II

Approved Budget for the Contract: P13,457,444.09

Contract Duration: 30 calendar days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed similar contract with a value at least 50% of the ABC within the last three years, and have key personnel and own equipment listed below available for the prosecution of the contract:

- Asphalt Batching Plant (production 50 M.T. per hr.)
- Asphalt Paver
- Asphalt Distributor

The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

- 1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) with application for eligibility
- 2. Issuance of Eligibility forms
- 3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements Deadline
- 4. Notice of Result of Eligibility Check
- 5. Issuance of Bid Documents
- 6. Pre-bid Conference
- 7. Receipt & Opening of Bids

Eligible firms are available at MEZ BAC Secretariat, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City upon submission of LOI, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 to the PEZA Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to BAC at the stated address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check at the same address.

The Bidding Documents may be issued only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 to the PEZA Cashier.

The pre-bid conference and the opening of bids will be conducted at the Conference Room, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., Mactan Economic Zone I, Lapu-lapu City.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) BELENA B. SUELLO
MEZ BAC Chairperson

PDI - May 12 & 19, 2006

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
MACTAN ECONOMIC ZONE I
Lapu-lapu City

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY, through its MEZ, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: Clean and Green and Facilities Maintenance Services in MEZ

Location: Mactan Economic Zone (MEZ), Ibo, Lapu-lapu City

Brief Description: Supply of Manpower, Tools and Equipment for the Clean and Green Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance of MEZ.

Approved Budget: P5,376,107.51

Contract Duration: 12 months

Delivery Period: Within 30 days from receipt of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and tools and equipment (owned) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 19 - 29, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	May 30, 2006 2:00 p.m.
3. Deadline for Submission and Opening of Bids	June 15, 2006 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	June 16 - 21, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	June 21 - 23, 2006

Complete set of Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,500.00 to PEZA-MEZ I Cashier. Bids and other communications may be addressed to MEZ Bid and Awards Committee, 2nd Flr. PEZA Admin Bldg., MEZ I, Lapu-lapu City.

The pre-bid conference and opening of bids shall be conducted at the Conference Room, 2/F PEZA Administration Bldg., Mactan Economic Zone I, Lapu-lapu City.

The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) BELENA B. SUELLO
MEZ BAC Chairperson

(PDI - May 19 & 26, 2006)

1,504 cases Palace appeals SC ruling on EO 464 vs minors to be voided by new law

By Armand N. Nocum

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS asking the Supreme Court to reverse its ruling on Executive Order 464, arguing that the President did not act arbitrarily or abuse her authority in issuing the edict barring members of the Cabinet and other officials from appearing in congressional hearings without her prior consent.

In 33-page motion for reconsideration filed Wednesday, Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura said "the President did not act so arbitrarily as to constitute abuse of discretion ... in requiring prior consent from executive officials before appearing in legislative investigations."

"It is respectfully prayed that the decision of this Court dated April 20, 2006 be reconsidered and set aside and another one be entered dismissing the petitions," Nachura said.

In asking the court to reverse its decision, Nachura said that the tri-

Nachura specifically asked the court to reverse its ruling that Sections 2 (b) and 3 of EO 464 were unconstitutional.

These portions of the order stated that the members of the Cabinet; officers of the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police; senior national security officials, among others, were "covered by executive privilege" and should secure the President's "prior consent" before appearing in any congressional inquiry.

The President issued the executive order in September 2005, at the height of congressional inquiries into the "Hello Garcí" election fraud scandal, the alleged diversion to Ms Arroyo's election campaign of the government's fertilizer fund, and the hiring of an American lobby group to push for amendments to the Philippine Constitution.

In asking the court to reverse its decision, Nachura said that the tri-

bunal had "overlooked certain facts and circumstances, which justify the consent requirement for executive officials appearing in legislative investigations."

"In the instant case, considering the total absence of any guidelines or rules promulgated by the Senate to govern the conduct of its inquiries in aid of legislation or otherwise, it cannot be said, therefore, that the President, who had merely required prior consent from her officials, acted with grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction by issuing the executive order in question," Nachura said.

He added: "Put differently, EO 464 did not violate any Senate rules or guidelines that could serve, in the least, as basis for the allegation that the President has committed any grave abuse of discretion. As such, it is premature for the Court to take cog-

nizance of the present petitions."

According to Nachura, the presidential consent required for the attendance at congressional inquiries of the officials described in the executive order was intended not only to ensure adherence to the doctrine on executive privilege but also to ensure respect for the rights of public officials appearing in congressional investigations.

Nachura asserted that the President may properly prohibit executive officials from appearing in congressional investigations by invoking the doctrine of executive privilege.

"The doctrine of executive privilege is founded upon the basic principle that in order for the President to carry out his constitutional responsibility to enforce the laws, he must be able to protect the confidentiality of certain types of documents and communications within the Executive Branch," he said.

By Cynthia D. Balana

A TOTAL OF 1,504 CRIMINAL CASES involving young offenders will soon be dismissed by courts nationwide as a result of the new law, Republic Act No. 9344, which exempts those 15 years and below from any criminal liability.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said this yesterday in a press conference, saying she expected the dismissal of the cases to happen in the next few weeks.

RA 9344, or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, provides that youth offenders aged 15 years and one day to 18 years old can only be criminally charged if they acted out the crime with discernment.

It also outlines the immediate turnover of children in conflict with the law to social workers upon apprehension. The law, which has a retroactive provision, will formally come into effect on May 22, 2006.

"The presumption is that those aged 15 years and below acted without discernment. Those whose cases will be dismissed will be placed under the DSWD facility for rehabilitation until they are ready for turnover to their parents," Cabral said.

She said the bulk of the cases to be dismissed came from Region 9 with 319, followed by Region 7 with 294, and the National Capital Region with 293.

The rest are from Region 11, 162; Region 10, 103; Region 1, 97; Region 8, 77; Region 2, 46; Region 4B; Caraga, 21; Region 6, 20; and the Cordillera Autonomous Region, 3.

Cabral said the crimes committed were mostly petty ones, and that there was only one case of homicide.

Erap sues for libel

By Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA will file multimillion-peso libel charges versus former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez for her claims in a national daily that the detained former leader used her bank accounts to launder P2.9 billion in ill-gotten funds.

Estrada spokesperson Didagen Dilangan said in a news conference that Estrada has already instructed his lawyer Rene Saguisag to draft the libel complaint against Pelaez and Manila Standard Today, the newspaper that published Pelaez's allegations.

"The story is meant to distract President Estrada who will again testify next week at the Sandiganbayan," Dilangan said.

Dilangan said the timing of Pelaez's allegations was suspect, coming at a time when Estrada is about to testify on allegations regarding his alleged ownership of the Jose Veneracion bank account that first came to fore during his impeachment trial.

"Why did it take her six years to come out? She should've shouted before. The things she told about happened long ago," Dilangan said.

Dilangan said Pelaez will face libel raps in the US.

He said lawyer Leonardo Siguion-Reyna of the Siguion-Reyna, Montecillo and Ongsiako Law Office has already left for the US on Wednesday night to file the suit in behalf of Estrada.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Friday, May 19, 2006

5th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 15:22-31

Gospel: John 15:12-17

Jesus said to his disciples, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.

"I shall not call you servants any more, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

"You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.

"This is my command, that you love one another."

Commentary

The Church gathered sends out a letter declaring the decision of the Holy Spirit which is their decision as well, that they are not to lay added burdens on the new converts. It brought encouragement to the churches. Jesus' commandment demands everything: to love as God loves us, even to lay down our lives for one another, as he did. Nothing else matters much in relation to this commandment, and all traditions, laws, customs, and rites need to be evaluated in light of the Spirit so that loving one another and all others is what we are known for; nothing else.

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Spirit behind efforts to help the less fortunate

By Fe Zamora

WHEN MAE AGNES RUSIA FINISHED high school in 1993, she braced herself for a year ahead as an out-of-school youth.

A year before, an older sister was accepted as a freshman at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Rusia knew that the meager family resources eked out by her on-and-off employed radio technician father and dressmaker-mother would have to go to her sister's daily needs.

During a career-orientation program for graduating students at the Quezon City High School, Rusia got hold of a leaflet from Punlaan School.

"I was attracted to the P500 monthly allowance; I need not ask for money from my parents," she said in Filipino.

She applied, and was accepted for the Punlaan School's Dual Training Scholarship Program in Food and Beverages Services.

At that time, Rusia said she did not know anything about the Prelature of Opus Dei, the controversial Catholic institution and moving spirit behind Punlaan School.

Student becomes teacher

Today, 30-year-old Rusia teaches baking to underprivileged girls in Punlaan, gratefully returning the training she received as a scholar at the unique professional training school located in San Juan.



São Josemaria Escrivá

ESCRIVA: Opus Dei founder

Manila Peninsula chief baker Rene Mesina.

100 percent employment

Graduates of Punlaan are sought after by employers in the food industry, which have established partnerships with the institution.

"We have 100 percent employment after graduation," Luz M. Filmer, executive director, said.

In fact, about 500 graduates of the two-year diploma course on food and beverages service are currently employed in top hotels and restaurants here and abroad.

Punlaan School started in the early '70s in a garage in New Manila. It was converted into a classroom for household helpers by a group of women who were inspired by the words of St. Josemaria Escrivá that love "is deeds, not words."

Women volunteers gave lessons on cooking, sewing, flower arrangement and even English.

Not owned by Opus Dei

From there, Punlaan moved to West Triangle. In 1975, the Foundation for Professional Training Inc. (FPTI), composed mostly of Opus Dei members, bought a two-story maternity clinic on M. Paterno Street in San Juan, and made it the Punlaan School.

Today, the Punlaan exudes quiet elegance, from its wooden floors, solid doors, hand-painted stairways with elaborate carvings, to the wrought-iron chandeliers and solid-wood pews in the chapel.



PUNLAAN CENTER in San Juan helps trains young women for hotel and restaurant work.

CERES DOYO

members and associates since the '60s. These initiatives connect Opus Dei to the less privileged in society.

School for boys

In Barangay Talon, Tuy, Batangas, there's a 10-hectare farm where teenage boys learn modern intercropping techniques and scientific breeding of butterflies. It also offers product marketing, bookkeeping, basic hygiene, table manners, and reflections on the teachings of Opus Dei.

Called the Talon Family Farm School, this unique learning institution is one of seven family farm schools established by the Pamamilyang Paaralang Agrikultura

Inc. (PPAI), a non-stock, non-profit foundation composed mostly of Opus Dei members.

But the scholars and beneficiaries of the family farm schools are rural folk, whether landowners or tenants, who may or may not become members of Opus Dei, according to school director Jose San Juan, an Opus Dei supernumerary.

"The goal is to teach students how to make their own farms productive, improve the living standards of their families, contribute to rural development, always guided by Christian values," San Juan said.

They are exactly like the guiding lights of Punlaan.

'Secular mentality but following Church agenda'

From page A1

could create a reverse effect.

Intrigued

Such was the case with Armando Capitán, 54, married, who followed columnist Hilarion Henares' tirades against Opus Dei published in the INQUIRER in the 1980s. Intrigued, Capitán decided to find out more. He attended a two-hour recollection at an Opus Dei center in Makati.

"I was attracted because of the spirit of friendship," the former swimming instructor says. Capitán is now a supernumerary while his wife is a cooperator. He works at Dualtech, an Opus Dei-affiliated training center. As required of supernumeraries, he observes the norms, among them daily Mass and regular confession, but he also finds time for an occasional drink with the guys in the neighborhood. Does he get a lot of ribbing? Not really, he says.

"Esto vir." To be a man. Words from Escrivá that Capitán and fellow supernumerary Cesar Bautista love to quote. Bautista, 53, used to work in Dualtech and is now connected with Southridge School.

The person next to you could be an Opus Dei member without

your knowing it. Although members strictly follow the so-called "norms" such as daily Mass attendance, frequent confessions (weekly at least), prayer and meditation and acts of mortification, they do not wear their affiliation on their lapel.

The numeraries who live at the Tanglaw University Center in Quezon City are mostly career women with day jobs outside the center.

Residence for numeraries

Dr. Lisa Ocampo teaches philosophy at the University of the Philippines while Lorie Ande handles values education at the Philippine Science High School. Jing Gomez works with a non-government organization while Vanessa Valencia is the center's director. All are graduates of UP.

When the INQUIRER visited Tanglaw on a Saturday, a demonstration on scuba diving was going on. Some numeraries were at prayer while others were doing house chores or simply relaxing.

Tanglaw

Tanglaw is just one of several residences for numeraries in the Philippines. It is home to about 40 members and like other residences, this one has upper middle-class amenities including an air-conditioned chapel with a gilded altar and an auditorium. Tanglaw is not just a residence though; it is also a venue for seminars for students and professionals. Beside Tanglaw is Habilan, a training center.

Numeraries who live together as a family (they do not call it community) do not keep their earnings, but they could ask for anything they need for "the work," be it a laptop, a cell phone, why, even a car. They do not have a vow of poverty but commit to a life of simplicity.

Regular lives, varied lifestyles

Even numeraries have to live in a way that is on the level of their status in the world. For example, Estanislao lives in a residence for Opus Dei numeraries in posh Dasmarinas Village in Makati and is driven around by a chauffeur.

Not everyone stays in Opus Dei for good. "HP" joined Opus Dei as a numerary when he was 20 and a college senior at De La Salle University. He left after 16 years and is now married.

"I owe to Opus Dei my continued appreciation of my Catholic faith," he tells the INQUIRER. "It gave me an opportunity to find meaning in ordinary work as a viable and attainable path toward spiritual growth."

Why did he leave? "I guess at some point in my life I could not keep up with the daily struggle to live a life of prayer," HP confesses. "Put another way, I did not respond to the grace of God as I had done in the past."

Supernumeraries live more regular lives and have varied

lifestyles. One could be a taxi driver or a professor, a chef or a columnist like INQUIRER's Belinda O. Cunanan.

Writer and editor Monina Alarey Mercado, like her late husband, advertising executive Antonio Mercado, is a supernumerary.

"Being in Opus Dei," Mercado says, "is not about joining a group but about coming face to face with God." She joins a weekly circle of 12 for study and reflection. Opus Dei, she says, is solidly based on theology, doctrine and the scriptures.

"There is something warm and human about the founder," she says. But she also admits that there is a certain kind of intellectuality in the Opus Dei. She recalls what the founder once said. "How do you catch souls? Like fish, by the head."

Intellectuals

Estanislao himself says that numeraries should at least have the intellect of one who could pursue a master's degree or a doctorate. Many of them do.

Cambridge and Harvard-educated economist and business writer Jose Romero, a supernumerary of "el opus" or "la obra" for 35 years, recalls his early encounters with Estanislao's group.

"I was impressed by their commitment to their profession. They even helped me with my research," he laughs.

When he found himself at the crossroads at some point, he decided to take the high road and joined Opus Dei that he now considers as his "spiritual gasoline." Romero is involved in development foundations for the poor.

But supernumeraries are not always from the upper crust of society.

Those of humble means who might not have had higher education but who heard the call to "the work" have responded generously. But little is known about them, while those who move in lofty places are often viewed with suspicion. What might be their agenda?

Thrust into the open

Author and Vatican journalist John Allen writes that there's an Opus Dei of myth and an Opus Dei of reality. "The myth," he says, "concerns an occult, ultra-wealthy and ultra-powerful force metastasizing at the heart of Roman Catholicism, harboring dark secrets and exercising vast unseen influence."

But Dan Brown, author of the potboiler "The Da Vinci Code," didn't invent this profile, Allen says. The group had already acquired it decades ago. There had to be reasons.

Now suddenly thrust into the scene via a wild plot of a novel and film, Opus Dei is facing what looks like a perfect moment to open itself more fully, rid itself of ghosts past, and beckon, as Jesus did to those who doubted, "Come and see."

BENGUET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Alapang, La Trinidad, Benguet

Tel. Nos. (074) 422-2000 / (074) 422-2110 Fax No. (074) 422-2848

INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE and SEALED BIDDING for the installation of a FIBER OPTIC BACKBONE SYSTEM for BENECO.

The PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE will be held on May 25, 2006 at 10:00A.M. at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound, Utility Road, Baguio City where the scopes of work will be discussed.

Prospective bidders must submit their Company Profile; Income Tax Returns and Audited Financial Statements for the past three (3) years; Business Permit; Track Record; Company Registration Certificate and List of Customers.

SEALED BIDS must be received on or before June 6, 2006 at 10:00A.M. at the Punctuality Hall, BENECO Building, DPS Compound. Utility Road, Baguio City. OPENING OF BIDS will be on the same date, time and venue.

Only those who were present during the Pre-Qualification Conference and who submitted the above-enumerated requirements will be allowed during the Bidding Proper.

BENECO reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the BENECO.

THE PBAC

(PDI - May 15 & 19, 2006)

TransCo

Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

Section I.

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Supply and Delivery of Control Cables
(Reference No.: PB060322-EL0036)

1. The National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO) through the CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board, intends to apply the sum of Php 4,940,700.00 being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Control Cables. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The TRANSCO-HO now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Control Cables. Delivery of the GOODS is required within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order. The Description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietors/organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting May 19, 2006 to June 21, 2006 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00). The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

5. The TRANSCO-HO will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 7, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.

6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 P.M. of June 22, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC)	Php 48,407.00
2. Bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC)	Php 74,110.50
3. Surety bond (2.5% of ABC)	Php 123,517.50
4. Foreign government guarantee (100% of ABC)	Php 4,940,700.00

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted.

7. Bid opening shall be on June 22, 2006 2:00 P.M. at the Admin Conference Rm. same address below. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

8. The National Transmission Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMU Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel No. (632) 9812335 / Fax No. (632) 9220432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) ARMANDO N. OCHOA
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - May 19 & 26, 2006)

Name of the Procuring Entity
Local Government Unit of Claveria

Project Reference Number
Name of Project: Claveria WAHIG System
Location of Project: Claveria, Mis. Or.

Standard Form Number : SF-CONS-04
Revised on: 9 May 04
Standard Form Title : INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit of Claveria through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites consultants to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted, to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Claveria WAHIG System
Brief Description : The proposed Claveria Wahig System will provide sufficient, safe and potable level III Water Supply System to 12 priority barangays and bulk supply of water at Barangay Poblacion. The project's major components include the development of intake structure, treatment facilities, a control room with related structures, installation of 44-45 km transmission facilities, installation of 43.53 distribution facilities, construction of 12 storage facilities, provision on metered connections, fire hydrants, valves fitting and other related appurtenances

Approved Budget : 4 Million
For the Contract : Design and Construction Supervision of Claveria WAHIG System
Source of Funding : 20% LDF/Gen. Fund
Contract Duration : Detailed Engineering Design = 60 days
Construction Supervision = until the completion of project

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done on the following criteria: experience of the consultant relative to proposed project, qualification of personnel and current workload. Not more than five (5) eligible bidders shall make up the short-list. The bid evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality Based Evaluation with the following consideration and its corresponding weight percentage, to wit:

a. Quality of personnel	30%
b. Experience and capability	45%
c. Plan of approach and Methodology	25%

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, bid Security, performance Security, Pre-Bidding conference(s), Evaluation of bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Activities

1. Deadline for submission of letter of intent and application for Eligibility	May 28, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	May 28 - June 2
3. Deadline for the Submission of Eligibility Requirements	June 2
4. Eligibility Checking	June 5
5. Results of Eligibility Check	June 13
6. Results of shortlisting	June 13
7. Pre-Bid conference	June 20
8. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 4 - 14
9. Deadline and Opening of Bids	July 17

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at BAC Secretariat, located at Municipal Engineer's Office upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Pesos (P 3,000.00) for Eligibility forms to the Local Government Unit of Claveria. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office. Bid Documents will be available only to shortlisted



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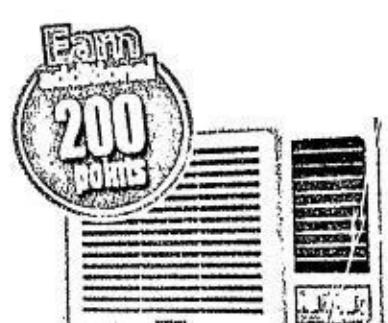
AIRCON



Earn
150
points

KOLIN
KS610B1

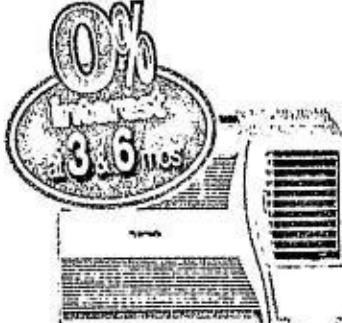
- 840 watts
- EER: 11.5



Earn
200
points

SAMSUNG
AW07P1HBA

- .75 hp
- Silver nano filter & evaporator
- No rust fins



0%
3-6 mos.

Panasonic
CWCX102PVH

- 1.0 hp w/ remote control
- 12 hr On/Off timer

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Earn
200
points

KOLIN
KA15CMW

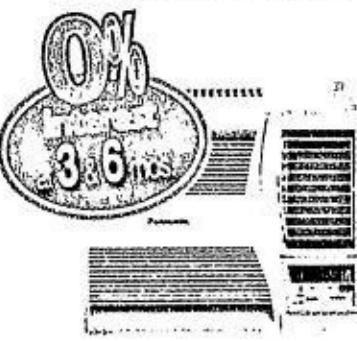
- 1.5 hp
- 55 kg



Earn
500
points

CONDURA
WCONDSD10EC

- Window type 1.25 hp
- With energy saving plug saves up to 40% in electrical consumption



0%
3-6 mos.

Panasonic
CWC52JPH

- 5 hp w/ timer
- 12 hr On/Off timer



Earn
100
points



Earn
100
points



LG
LA100MG

- 1 hp



KELVINATOR
WKELH006A

- Window type .5 hp
- Compact size
- Easy to operate manual controls



YORK
Y9USC09-6A

- 1 hp manual
- Energy efficient
- Anti-rust technology
- Exceptionally silent



HITACHI
RATOMA

- Anti bacterial filter
- High cooling capacity
- Blue fins evaporator

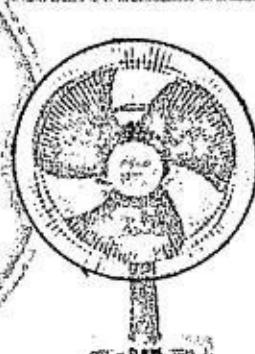


FEDDERS
2PY200917L-PH

- Electronic control
- Rust resistant
- Auto air swing

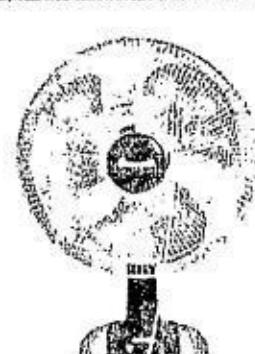
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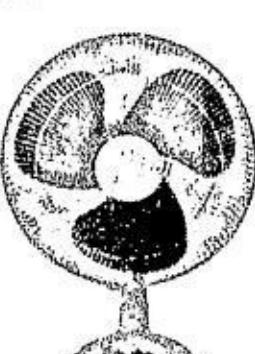
MITSUBOSHI
MD-1618

- 16" Desk Fan



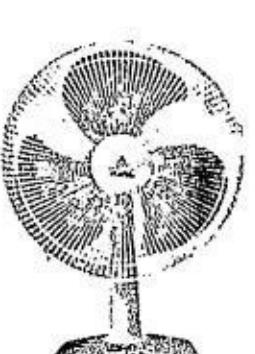
Dowell
JF-416

- Desk Fan



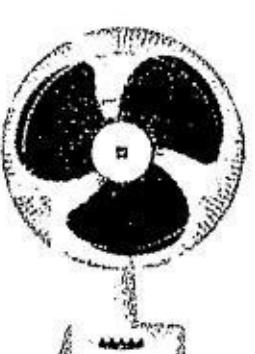
UNION
AMD-16

- 16" Desk Fan



HANABISHI
'The Space'

- 16" Desk Fan



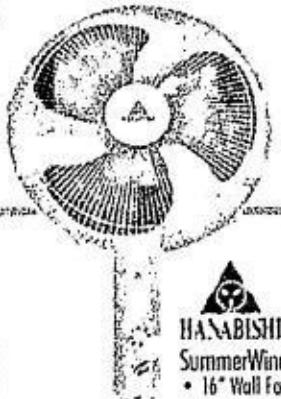
Dowell
D40Y-G/B

- 16" Desk Fan



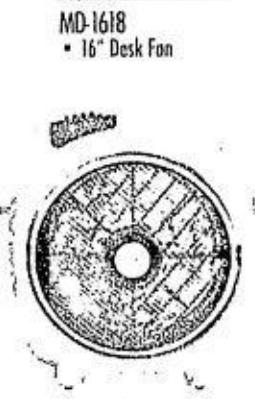
PROMAC
iFan

- 16" Industrial Floor Fan



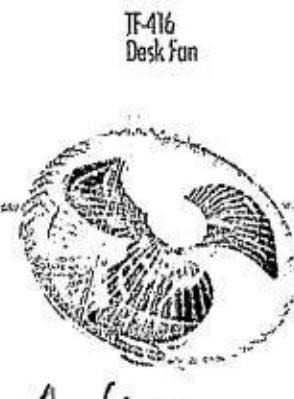
HANABISHI
SummerWind

- 16" Wall Fan



Dowell
BK-141FC

- 16" Box Fan



Asahi
CF822

- 18" Metal Ceiling Fan



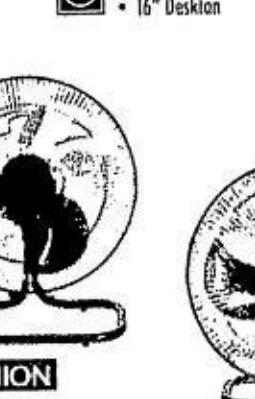
MITSUBOSHI
MG-236

- 12" Chrome Industrial Fan



UNION
U5G16MB

- 16" Industrial Floor Fan



PROMAC
PRO-AIRE

- 16" Chrome Industrial Floor Fan

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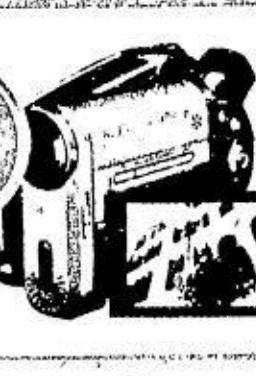
Earn
2500
points

JVC
GZ-MG30U

- 3D Noise reduction
- 2.5 LCD Monitor
- 25x Optical
- 800x Digital Zoom

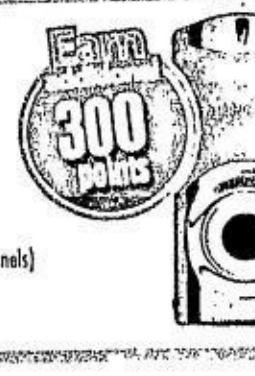


Earn
500
points



Canon
DVD CAMCORDER
DC-20

- 10x Optical Zoom
- 200x Digital Zoom
- Dolby Digital (2 channels)



Earn
300
points

Canon
EOS i Zoom

- 5 megapixels
- 2.4x optical zoom
- Smooth continuous shooting

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additional
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points

SM Advantage
points

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AJAC18GKQ
• 2 hp window type

0%
Interest
3 & 6 mos.

Whirlpool ASK-09

- Split type aircon
- Airflow direction control

0%
Interest
6 mos.

SANYO SA96P

- 1 hp
- EER 4.2
- Earn additional 500 points

AEV09KB
• 1 hp window type

• Manual control

0%
Interest
3 mos.

Shinco KC35A

- 1.5 hp window type
- Quiet run
- Powerful Dehumidification

0%
Interest
10 mos.

Fami 500

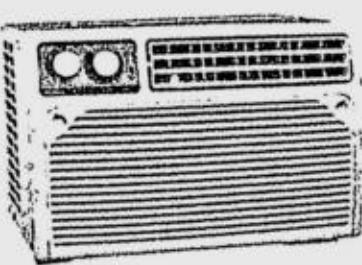
Carrier WCARF010EA

- Electronic w/ remote control
- 720 watts

FEDDERS SPLIT TYPE

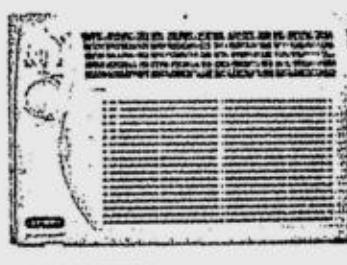
1FE1009N7F

- Wireless remote control
- Filter check indicator
- Washable anti-mold purifying filter



GREE KC15P

- .6 hp window air-type
- 4-way airflow
- Economic sleeping mode



koppel 1KX006N7A-PH

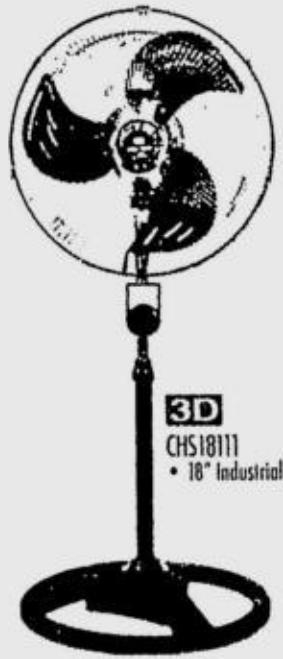
- Manual control
- Rust resistant
- Easy to clean washable filter



CAMEL

SIF-18

- 18" Industrial Stand Fan



3D

CHS18111

- 18" Industrial Stand Fan



Nikon

ISF182

- 18" Industrial fan



PROMAC

UltraFan

- 16" Industrial Stand Fan



3D

SS45

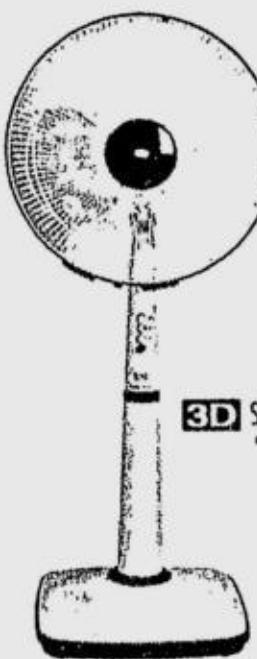
- 18" Stand Fan



CAMEL

SRF-16CT

- 16" Stand Fan

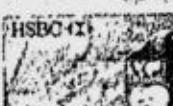
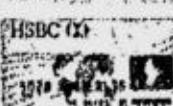


3D

Silentwind

- 16" Stand fan

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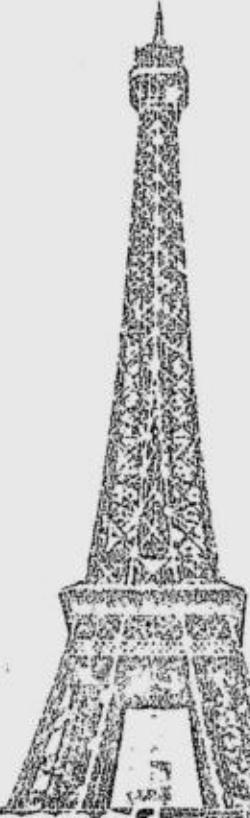
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820-6356 • SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2977084 • ROCKWELL 8981819 • PODIUM 8871215 • SM CITY BIGUTAN 7779295 • SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8592501 •
ZARO 7812773 • SM CITY VALENZUELA 2919973 • SM MOLINO 046-4743011-14 • V-MALL 7251011 • STA. ROSA 049-8344550 • SM CITY BAGUIO (074) 6197695

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Judicial statesmanship

WHEN CHIEF JUSTICE ARTEMIO PANGANIBAN made his speech before the Georgetown Law Center, he was not only addressing a body of lawyers, he was speaking to an institution of higher learning that has taken an interest in the Philippines for several generations. Since 1937, Philippine presidents have received degrees honoris causa from Georgetown, and President Macapagal-Arroyo considers herself to be something of an alumna of the institution.

EDITORIAL The Chief Justice was also speaking to an audience whose familiarity with the status of the law in our country has been defined by The New York Times editorial that came out earlier this year and warned of the dangers of creeping authoritarianism. It was this disturbing development that Panganiban directly confronted in his speech. His remarks validated the opinion held both here and abroad, that the executive department has made attempts to assert and wield powers that are contrary to basic liberties and democracy.

Panganiban said that under his watch, the Supreme Court has managed to "safeguard the liberty of our people and to nurture their prosperity, while upholding the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary." He pointed out that the court's recent rulings on Executive Order 464, the Calibrated Preemptive Response and Proclamation 1017 are "landmark" rulings, which serve to uphold "the primacy of civil liberties over governmental actions."

His message was clear, unambiguous, and, we might add, necessary: Political and civil rights are not expendable, period—and certainly not in the name of progress. Panganiban said what many have said before (including former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. in his fact-finding commission's report on coups) and which should be said again and again: "Filipinos may endure occasional hunger, but they will never tolerate injustice and indignity for long."

As Panganiban eloquently put it, "Liberty becomes the guarantee that, free from all interference and suppression, we all can conceive of the good life and act according to those conceptions. I venture the proposition that a society marked by such liberty is prosperous." Liberty and prosperity must go hand in hand. They reinforce and compliment—even protect—each other, and without one, the other is impossible, or only an approximation of what could be.

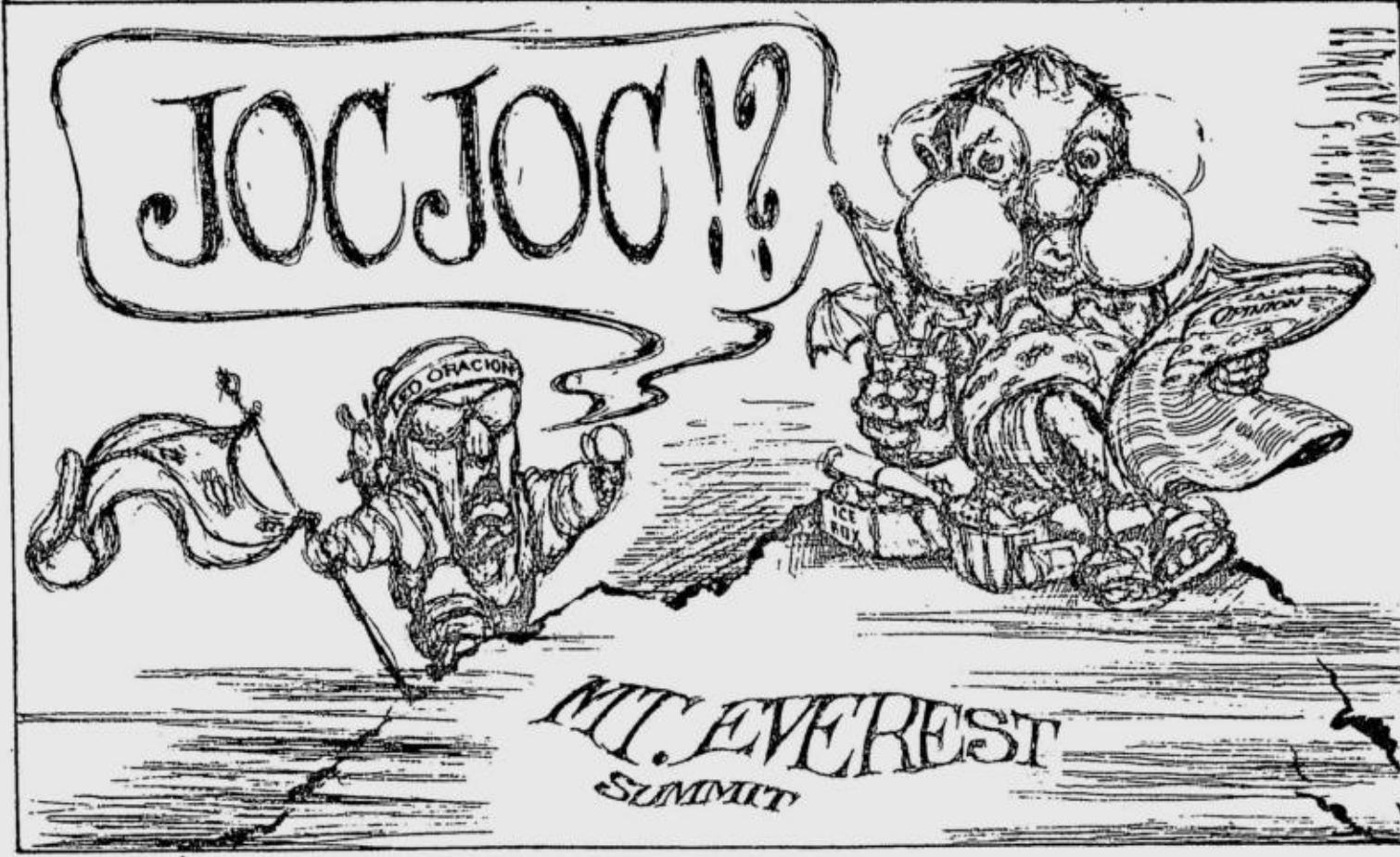
For the American audience listening to Panganiban's speech, his words were comforting. For Filipinos at home hearing about his remarks, it is reassuring to know that the world is being told that indeed, as Panganiban optimistically titled one of his recent books, the country may be undergoing a "judicial renaissance." If the Davide Court was primarily interested in instituting efficiency and accomplishing a modernization of the judiciary, the Panganiban Court may yet go down in history as one dedicated to re-consecrating the judiciary to its historic role as defender of the people's liberties.

But saying what he said, did more than just reassure audiences abroad and here. Statements of an official nature serve to raise the bar for conduct. It would be difficult, for the remainder of the Chief Justice's term, for either he or his colleagues to issue rulings that are inferior to what they have already penned. This is the essence of statesmanship: to raise the bar, and put forward a degree of dedication and even performance that exceeds expectations.

Like all the major institutions of our country, the Supreme Court has been subjected to an erosion of prestige and confidence among the public. To a certain extent, confidence has been restored. We hope that the Chief Justice knows that he has only begun to make his mark. A challenge to the Supreme Court remains. It must not only issue rulings that firmly defend the people's rights. It must also now set about issuing rulings in a timely manner, so that together with a vigorous defense of the public good comes an effective bar to officials abusing the law. Because those whose wrists the courts have slapped are still claiming that it was worth it, since they accomplished what they wanted to do, regardless of their eventually having been judged to have acted illegally.

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A 1-2-3 in Masinloc power plant deal?

As I See It



Neal H. Cruz

LAST WEEK, THE NEWSPAPERS CAME OUT with the news that a Malaysian firm, Ranhill Power Berhad, came to the rescue of financially strapped YNN Pacific Consortium that had won the bidding for the coal-fired Masinloc power plant of the National Power Corp. The 600-MW plant is the largest ever to be sold in Napocor's privatization efforts. The YNN Consortium won the bidding with what some critics call "an obscenely high" bid of \$562 million, well above the reserve price set by the government, and almost double the bid of First Gen. Corp., amounting to \$275 million. So officials of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the government agency in charge of the sales, were ecstatic. They were seeing plenty of dollar signs in the clouds.

But it turned out to be a mirage. And the recent rescue by Ranhill has a catch.

The bid conditions require the winning bidder to pay up-front 40 percent of the bid price (in the case of YNN \$222 million out of its \$562 million bid) 270 days after the count-down, plus an \$11-million performance bond as a guarantee that YNN would pay the purchase price. But two-and-a-half years later, YNN has not yet paid even the down payment. Under the terms of the bidding, PSALM can already foreclose the \$11-million performance bond, but it refuses to do that because of greed.

Greed is what makes victims easy prey to swindlers. Victims of pyramid scams, double-your-money and ginto-sa-gusi and similar scams are bilked because they are tempted by plenty of easy money promised by the swindlers. Something similar is happening in the stalled Masinloc plant sale.

Although early on, doubts were raised about the financial capability of the winning bidders (Sen. Joker Arroyo publicly questioned the credibility of YNN whose offices, he claimed, were in an address in Binondo that turned out to be leased to a janitorial service), PSALM was hypnotized by the unusually high bid price.

There is no basis under the bid documents or under the law for the grant of the extension, but the action would seem justified because the purchase price was simply too good to pass up. Greed! Against the purchase price of \$562 million, the forfeiture of YNN's \$11.2-million performance bond seemed too puny a consolation.

On March 31, 2006, the already-extended deadline, YNN still could not come up with the money. PSALM again gave it a 90-day extension, or until the end of June 2006.

To sweeten the pot, YNN offered a \$3 million increase in the performance bond, which PSALM, because of greed again, accepted.

This time, it was reported that the

Malaysian company, Ranhill Berhad, had taken over the Australians' share in the consortium. Ranhill would be the white knight that would shell out the \$14.2-million performance bond and the \$222 million up-front payment that would seal the deal.

Ranhill's takeover from Great Pacific is not sanctioned by PSALM's own bidding rules. A potential purchaser's financial capability and track record must be screened and proven to be impeccable by the bid documents at, or prior to, the bidding. But PSALM turned a blind eye to these violations.

Soon enough the trick surfaced. On April 28, 2006, the newspaper reported that Ranhill had deposited the \$14.2-million performance bond. But it turned out that Ranhill's entry into the fray was not as straightforward as it appeared. Ranhill had slipped in as a condition to the effectiveness of (and not merely as a condition to drawing on) the bond that Masinloc first be assured of a supply contract with Meralco.

Meralco has nothing to do with it. It is a totally different and independent entity. Does Ranhill expect the government to force Meralco to sign a supply contract with YNN? Considering the horrendously high price YNN is obliged to pay for Masinloc, the resulting high-priced contract will result in horrendously high power rates for consumers.

Ranhill's condition changes the terms of Masinloc's auction. Masinloc was bidden out as a merchant plant and a valid performance bond was necessary regardless of whether someone was guaranteed or not to buy Masinloc's power. A supply contract with Meralco changes the basic assumptions of the bidding. Had Masinloc been bidden out with a supply contract, certainly other bidders would have submitted higher bids.

The trick has become evident. YNN boxed out its competitors with a very high bid price and now it is changing the terms of the auction.

Pinoy int'l peacekeepers as milking cows

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan



HOW DISAPPOINTING TO READ THAT THE Armed Forces now wants to take a 40-percent cut from the pay of Filipino soldiers who serve as UN peacekeepers abroad! The Pinoy soldier has been conned and bilked dry while he risks life and limb in his own land. I had thought that, finally, under the watchful eye of international auditors, the Pinoy soldier serving abroad would get his due. How naive it was to think that he could free himself from the clutches of local rent-seekers.

This phenomenon of international peacekeepers is of recent vintage, though the rules have been in place since 1945 when the United Nations was created. The UN largely operates through moral suasion and consent-based sanctions, except for the Security Council which can enforce its decisions "to maintain or restore international peace and security." When the Council takes "Chapter VII action" under the UN Charter, it calls on UN member states to contribute their troops to "enforcement action." However, except for occasional successes like in the 1957 Suez Crisis, that clause was effectively shelved during the Cold War, since both the United States and the Soviet Union held veto powers in the Council.

That all changed with the Kremlin's demise, and the full meaning of Chapter VII sprang onto the public eye in a big way in the famous 1991 Operation Desert Storm against Saddam Hussein, when American Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf led multinational troops in the "liberation" of Kuwait. Closer to home, the UN has also sent its "blue helmets" to Cambodia and to East Timor—and Filipino soldiers were there. Today, they are deployed to various hot spots: Haiti, Liberia, the Sudan (the list includes a solitary Filipino in Afghanistan).

I was happy for these Filipino enlisted men. Finally, a chance to work and get paid professionally, to stand shoulder to shoulder with foreign troops, and to receive a UN services medal, another feather in the careers of proud warriors.

I had assumed all the while that the Filipino

put to blessed purposes ... Tsk, tsk.

It is not the reckoning of the cost alone that is debatable, but also its allocation. To shift that cost to the soldier is unfair. Why should he subsidize the Philippine government's contribution to the UN Security Council? All taxpayers contribute to that subsidy. In effect, the 40-percent levy concentrates the burden on the peacekeeper himself, on top of the burden that all soldiers are sworn to bear and from which ordinary taxpayers are spared, namely, the risk of dying in the line of duty.

It is high time that this matter be put in order. The Philippine economy will continue to rely on foreign remittances for a while, and the Filipino soldier and his family can surely use the occasional legitimate windfall from UN peacekeeping service. At the same time, UN blue helmet operations seem on the rise and will flourish in the coming years, as the global community flexes its muscle and realizes that, today, the real battle is against abusive local powers, whether they are genocidal maniacs, bloodthirsty warlords, or parasitical elites. Filipino blue helmets speak well of our nation's commitment to humanitarian goals.

First, the Filipino peacekeepers must be selected in merit-based, competitive processes, free from the clutches of padrinos. None of those last-minute additions to the list, they who jump the queue and bypass worthy comrades. None, I hope, of those returning soldiers reportedly caught in attempted smuggling who stain the record of those who have served honorably.

Second, the Filipino peacekeeper must receive his pay without illicit deductions on whatever excuse. These fee arrangements are fixed by formal agreements among sovereigns, and cannot—to borrow the words of the Supreme Court in its PP 1017 decision—be trifled with, the way this government does willy-nilly with the Philippine Constitution.

Comments to passionforreason@gmail.com

Leftists' purge and death squads

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



THE MURDER LAST WEEK OF MANUEL NARDO, coordinator of Bayan Muna, brought to 123 the number of leftist activists killed since 2001, of which 93 were Bayan Muna members. It also elevated the profile of what appears to be a revival of the anti-communist witch-hunt which swept the country in the 1950s and 1970s.

The murder sparked accusations from the military that the latest wave of killings is part of the internal "cleansing" within the Communist Party. But the Left blamed the killings on government security forces.

Whoever is responsible, the number of Left-wing militants killed during the past five years is staggering. It stretches belief that all 123 were killed by fellow-leftists, even if we assume that there has been a continuing internal purge in the Communist Party since the 1980s, when scores of them were exterminated in their "killing fields," mainly in Davao, at the height of their factional power struggle.

In the history of the communist insurgency in this country, there has not been so many communists killed since the height of the Huk rebellion in the 1950s and the anti-communist campaign of President Marcos in the 1970s against the New People's Army. Most of the casualties then came from encounters between the NPA and the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the now defunct Philippine Constabulary. It was a straightforward conflict between the military and the communist guerrillas.

If the claim of the military that the deaths are a result of "internal cleansing" in the party is true, then the communist insurgency has acquired a new dimension, an intensification of the phenomenon where the "revolution devours its own children" in a span of five years, during the Arroyo administration. This is what makes the "internal cleansing" theory hard to believe.

Thus, the question becomes unavoidable: Why is the administration raising the communist bogey at this time, decades after the waning of the threat of a communist revolution? Another question: Is the regime reviving the communist specter as a

formula for political survival and for consolidating its fragile support in the Armed Forces, where the anti-communist tradition is deep-seated?

Until these questions are answered, there is one undeniable fact: The killings have escalated against the background of heightened harassment of the parliamentary stream of the Left. The attack on the Left is focused on Bayan Muna, which is significant, as we shall see.

The Bayan Muna party-list leaders elected to Congress—Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casilio and Joel Virador together with their colleagues Crispin Beltran, Rafael Mariano and Liza Maza—face rebellion charges alleging that they were part of a Left-Right "conspiracy" that mounted the aborted coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo last February. They were charged together with Communist Party leaders Jose Ma. Sison and Luis Jalandoni, and, in an incompatible combination, with former Sen. Gregorio Honasan, ring leader of several coup plots against former President Corazon Aquino. This is an improbable and incendiary ideological mix fabricated by an administration that is desperate for survival.

Ocampo has an explanation for the government's claim that the purges ordered by the Communist Party in the 1980s were continuing. He said, "It will be a propaganda vehicle for the government to blame the Left for the continued killing of activists and exculpate the state security forces that appear circumstantially to be the perpetrators." He said there was a "grand conspiracy" to pin him and other leftist militants in Congress down for the unsolved murders. This was indicated by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's claim that

the rebellion cases could open a "Pandora's box" of revelations on the purges of the 1980s, he added.

This means the government has been raking up retrospectively party crimes in the past to back its rebellion complaint, triggered by the alleged "tactical alliance" of the leftist leaders in a "conspiracy" with military officers accused of allegedly plotting the Feb. 24 coup.

No evidence has not been introduced by the government to show in what way the leftist leaders plotted with the military officers, including Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim of the Army Special Action Force. The plot, as revealed by the government, was that Lim and his cohorts would announce their withdrawal of support for the Arroyo administration and then join a civilian rally in Makati to spark a people power uprising.

The government appears to have anchored its claim of a Left-Right "conspiracy" on the presence in the Makati march of Left-wing groups carrying red streamers and slogans demanding the ouster of Ms Arroyo.

The inclusion of the Bayan Muna leaders in the rebellion case marks the first legal action against members of the communist movement (or at least its moderate faction) since they joined the parliamentary stream of Philippine politics by participating in party-list elections for Congress. The effort to link them to the military groups associated with employing extra-constitutional means to change the political leadership therefore interrupts the trend toward weaning the Left away from armed revolution and absorbing it in parliamentary politics.

The fact that most of the victims of the recent killings were Bayan Muna members indicates that the government considers the parliamentary wing of the communist movement to be a threat to regime survival if it coalesces with the military right-wing. From this perspective, the harassment of the party-list representatives is a shortsighted strategy to ensure regime survival.

It also sets back the absorption of the Left into the middle ground of Philippine politics.

Side effects

THE GOVERNMENT'S ANNUAL FAMILY PLANNING SURVEYS are becoming almost too predictable.

The latest survey, conducted in 2005 among 50,000 households and released early this week, shows the CPR to be 49.3 percent. "CPR" here isn't cardio-pulmonary resuscitation or the Arroyo administration's calibrated preemptive response, but contraceptive prevalence rate, a fancy term for family planning usage. The National Statistics Office (NSO), which is responsible for conducting the survey, notes that this CPR has not increased in the last five years.

The release of the FPS statistics came only a few days after Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri came out with the claim that the country's annual population growth rate had dropped from 2.36 percent to 1.95 percent. Neri came under fire after the announcement as people wondered how he could make that claim when the government has not conducted a national census since 2000.

The release of the latest FPS shows that little is happening in the area of family planning, so it would be a major miracle indeed if the population growth rate has dropped. Yet, President Macapagal-Arroyo came out shortly after Neri's announcement noting that drop in population growth rate and suggesting that family planning funds now be transferred to school-feeding programs.

The President was obviously responding to bad publicity from the latest Social Weather Stations survey on hunger in Filipino households. I wonder though if she has ever wondered if there's a connection between hunger and rapid population growth, one which is likely to continue if family planning usage remains at its current low rates.

Let me put the CPR figures in context. First, the national average of 49 percent reflects wide discrepancies. Cagayan Valley has the highest CPR with 58 percent, while the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has a dismal 16 percent. The National Capital Region (NCR) has a rate of 44 percent, lower than the national average.

One reason the national CPR of 49 percent is so infuriating is that we can't seem to at least break the 50 percent mark, even as other countries all over the world are racing ahead. To give a few examples from among our neighbors, Vietnam has a CPR of 79 percent; Thailand, 72 percent; Singapore, 62 percent; and Indonesia, 60 percent.

In these countries, a large percentage of the family planning users employ modern methods, meaning those that are reliable. In the Philippines, the 49 percent figure includes some 13 percent who are using methods like withdrawal, a crude method with a very high rate of failure.

Fears

Why aren't more Filipinos using family planning? The main reason, one which has persisted through the years, has not been religion. Muslim leaders in Mindanao, for example, issued a fatwa or religious edict a few years ago supporting family planning. And while Roman Catholic bishops oppose "artificial" family planning, most Catholics who are not using family planning have never heard of the papal encyclical *Hu manae Vitae*, or the theological explanations of the "unitive" and "procreative" functions of marriage which are used to forbid "artificial" contraception.

What many Filipinos have heard are stories of "side effects" of family planning methods. In a research I conducted a few years back, these fears revolve mainly around the pill, with perceived dangers ranging from cancer to putting on weight. I should say quickly that many low-income women actually saw the weight gain as a good thing, a sign that they had a good fit or *hiyang* with a particular brand.

There are also "side effects" described for other modern methods. Tubal ligation, for example, is believed by many to lead to increased libido for the woman... and a potential for extramarital affairs.

The fears are often unfounded, based on hearsay as well as popular misconceptions about how the body works. For example, pills are believed to cause cancer because they are taken daily, leaving residues (*lataks*) in the uterus that accumulate.

The connection between tubal ligation and increased libido may have been based partly on husbands' (and wives') observations that women are more sexually responsive and relaxed after the ligation. That shouldn't be surprising, considering that the fear of an unwanted pregnancy has been removed, but to equate that with nymphomania and extramarital pregnancies requires a fertile imagination.

The male imagination that is. Many of the fears around contraception are really male-based. The irony is that as our family planning program weakens, men become even more powerful.

How so? The misconceptions going around in relation to family planning are often perpetuated by a mixed bunch of men. A vocal few are opposed to family planning for religious reasons, but others couldn't care less about religion, their opposition based on machismo values that equate masculinity with having as many children as possible. Opposition from husbands was in fact mentioned together with a fear of side effects as the main reason for women wanting to drop out of family planning.

Losers

Perhaps what's so painful about the FPS findings is that women generally seem to want family planning, and are even willing to pay for services and methods. Yet their access to family planning has been shrinking under the present government.

The President claims she is in favor of choices, and, claiming that too much had been poured into "artificial" family planning methods like the pill, she has called for more resources to be poured into natural family planning (NFP). The Catholic organization Couples for Christ received P50 million from the Department of Health two years ago to do this, but the impact doesn't show in the FPS, which found NFP usage to be at a measly 0.4 percent. Reproductive health groups also observed that more time seemed to be spent spreading more misconceptions about "artificial" methods rather than promoting natural family planning itself.

Low family planning usage has many side effects for the nation. And who are the biggest losers in all this? It's the women, who have to face up to one unwanted pregnancy after another, often finding themselves having to raise children alone as the men abscond. It's the children who lose, with poorer health and nutrition, and higher dropout rates from schools.

There's a story going around about one city mayor in Mindanao who asked his parish priest, "Father, we have so many street children now. Could you allow them to sleep in your church?" The priest hesitated, and then explained that it would be too difficult for him to handle so many children. The wise mayor smiled and said, "Then, Father, would you mind keeping quiet when I promote family planning?"

Women on death row

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



IN THE DAYS BEFORE JOSIE ESPARAS, THE FIRST Filipino woman on death row facing lethal injection, was set to receive the ultimate penalty, she took pains to prepare herself to meet her Maker.

As Rachel Ruelo, superintendent of the Correctional Institute for Women, tells it, Esparas underwent a facial and even had a brand-new uniform sewn, reasoning that she should look her best before crossing the divide. (I think she may also have had the media coverage on her mind!) But as it turns out, then President Joseph Estrada had a change of heart and commuted her sentence, for alleged involvement in drug trafficking, to life imprisonment.

Today, having proven herself an adept gardener, Esparas is kept busy tending to the vegetable plots, and doing such a good job that Ruelo is thinking of putting her in charge.

According to Ruelo, who refers to all the women in the CIW as "my women," there are now 33 women on death row, none of whom are singled out for special treatment and who are free to mingle with the other women prisoners. Indeed, going by the accounts of the authors of "Invisible Realities, Forgotten Voices" is a joint project of the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) and the Women's Education, Development Productivity and Research Organization (Wedpro), with funding support from the European Union. Aside from Santos, the rest of the team is composed of Ma. Rosalyn Mesina, Marlea Munoz and Nancy Edralin Parreno.

Of the 28 women on death row whom the research team encountered in mid-2004, only 12 consented to participate in the study, after the team met with them and explained the rationale for the study as well as its limitations, including the fact that participation in the study was no guarantee that their cases would be reviewed. Of the 12 women respondents, four were chosen for more detailed case studies, with the team choosing one convict each for the four most common crimes for which women on death row were convicted: kidnapping for ransom, drug-related offenses, parricide and murder.

RESEARCH on the four case studies involved multiple in-depth interviews with the women who agreed to tell their stories, as well as interviews with their family members, lawyers and others who could verify/contradict their claims.

Santos said they also went out of their way to review and debate what details they would include in the stories, "because even if we used pseudonyms, certain details could still give them away." She added that they also didn't want to discuss.

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The real Philippine Constitution

THE REAL FUNDAMENTAL LAW of the land in our country is not the 1987 Constitution but the debt conditions imposed on us by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The poverty and injustice torturing the Filipino masses are the handiwork of those conditions, not of the Constitution.

And the real purpose of the Charter change movement is to keep President Macapagal-Arroyo in power, in her capacity as the enforcer of the WB-IMF debt conditions in our country.

What are these debt conditions?

The first is automatic debt service. More than one-third of our annual national budget is automatically allocated for debt service; it is not subject to congressional action, although the Constitution provides that no money

shall be taken out of the Treasury except by an act of Congress. Moreover, the allocation exceeds the item for education which, under the Constitution, ought to be the biggest.

The second is the EVAT law. GMA's claim that the EVAT increase and its imposition on oil and power was her decision is false. Without the new EVAT, our credit rating would have been downgraded further, and we would have been paying prohibitively high interests on our debts. If GMA made a decision at all, it was only to agree to pick the pockets of Filipinos and to automatically turn over her loot to the WB-IMF-protected creditors.

The third is the enactment of the Oil Deregulation Law which removed the government from the oil-price fixing picture. With this law in place, oil prices have been shooting up to the sky.

The fourth is the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira). This was a condition for the release of some \$900 million in loans already approved by the WB-IMF. With the Epira, the government's generation and transmission assets are now being sold to foreign power players.

The fifth is the Mining Act of 1995. This was first declared by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional, but the decision has been reversed since. The first Supreme Court decision was in keeping with the 1987 Constitution; the second bore the telltale of the WB-IMF debt conditions.

In 1995, there was an omnibus WB-IMF debt condition: Philippine accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the reorientation of Philippine policies to the imperatives of globalization through liberalization, deregulation, privatization and level play-

ing field. The result was the decimation of the economy, particularly manufacturing and agriculture—the country's principal employers. Today's unemployed and underemployed exceed 11 million workers. Most of the WB-IMF debt conditions, if not all, operate in defiance of the Constitution.

Today, in our country, sovereignty resides in the market, no longer in the people. The main function of government is to oversee the implementation of the WB-IMF debt conditions, not to look after the people's welfare as mandated by the Constitution.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square
Condominium,
145 15th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Were released prisoners for real?

THIS IS IN REACTION to the comments of Speaker Jose de Venecia in relation to President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Saudi Arabia. ("Arroyo trip to Saudi called major coup," PDI, 5/12/06) He considered King Abdullah's assurance of continuous oil supply to the Philippines as a major win for Ms Arroyo. The question is: Is the oil free, or sold at a lower price?

Our problem is not the source of supply, it is the price of the oil, which affects the budget of the Filipinos. Supply is not a problem as long as you have the money to pay for it.

On the overseas Filipino workers re-

leased from jail, government in facilitating their deportation. I know these things because I worked in Saudi Arabia for six years in the 1980s.

Do you think the head of state like Saudi Arabia would release prisoners if they were real criminals? Please bear in mind that in that country, real criminals are physically separated from their heads.

It should be noted that in Saudi Arabia, it is normal for the government to put in a secured area expatriates whose employers can no longer pay them. This is done to protect the displaced employees. They are not real prisoners.

The fact is, the OFWs who were released from Saudi Arabian jails were prisoners not because they committed serious crimes. They were prisoners because the Philippine government did not extend to them the needed proper help. They were, therefore, not real prisoners. The claim that they were prisoners is just another piece of administration propaganda meant to mislead the Filipino people.

No, I'm neither with the opposition nor for them.

—ANDREW ONA,
roliemel@yahoo.com.au

Don't stop protesting

WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT STOP protesting the current regime. Those of us here in the United States have allowed the Bush crime family to take this country in a fascist direction. The more you let up, the more they take advantage of their power to strip us of the freedoms for which we had fought so hard.

Hold your leaders to account as we should be doing here in the United States. History is repeating itself in both our countries. We went through this with Richard Nixon, just as you went through this with Ferdinand Marcos.

Keep up the good fight. As Maria Theresa Pangilinan said so eloquently very recently, "Patalisik si Gloria!"—Matt in Jax, Florida (via e-mail)

Let the politicians enact a law making election cheating punishable by death. Any politician who uses any form of cheating to win a mandate is actually betraying the public trust and, in the end, it is the whole nation that suffers.—Ed Bolante (via e-mail)

It's about time somebody brought back tact and courtesy in the Department of Justice. Raul Gonzalez's own statements—"Nobody can tell me to shut up," "I always speak my mind. I have never intervened on that case"—are conflicting. Let us remember that Gonzalez ordered the arrest of citizens suspected of going against the Arroyo administration, threatened a female university graduate for "disrupting" their graduation ceremony and criticized a former President regarding her way of disciplining her child.

"I have never intervened in that case," he said, in reference to the Subic rape case. Who is he kidding? He got irked when the judge disapproved his downgrading of the charges against the three US soldiers.

He is not meddling? He has muddled the case too many times. It's a good thing they got lawyer Evelyn Ursua to handle the case, and now other legal eagles are helping. Hopefully, they will make sense of the insensible Visiting Forces Agreement.

I wonder when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will begin to realize that it's about time she replaced some men in her Cabinet. And eventually she can follow them.—Melba Irene Gabaya, Davao City (via e-mail)

My solution to the problem of our country: GMA must resign to give way to the will of the people. Are we afraid who will be the next leader? It's our duty as citizens to select the best leader for our country.—Edgardo de Castro (via e-mail)

If we are talking about how to solve the country's problems, that's easy to answer. I just don't know if it's easy to do. It is this: Let the politicians, both from the opposition and the administration, do what they are supposed to do, which is to serve the people and lead this country to a better future. They should stop bickering and do their jobs, and not just try to look good.

Hard, isn't it?—Edwin Tayag (via e-mail)

Let us recognize the symptom first before we talk about the real problem. President Arroyo has to step down or declare a snap election to prove that she does have the mandate of the people.

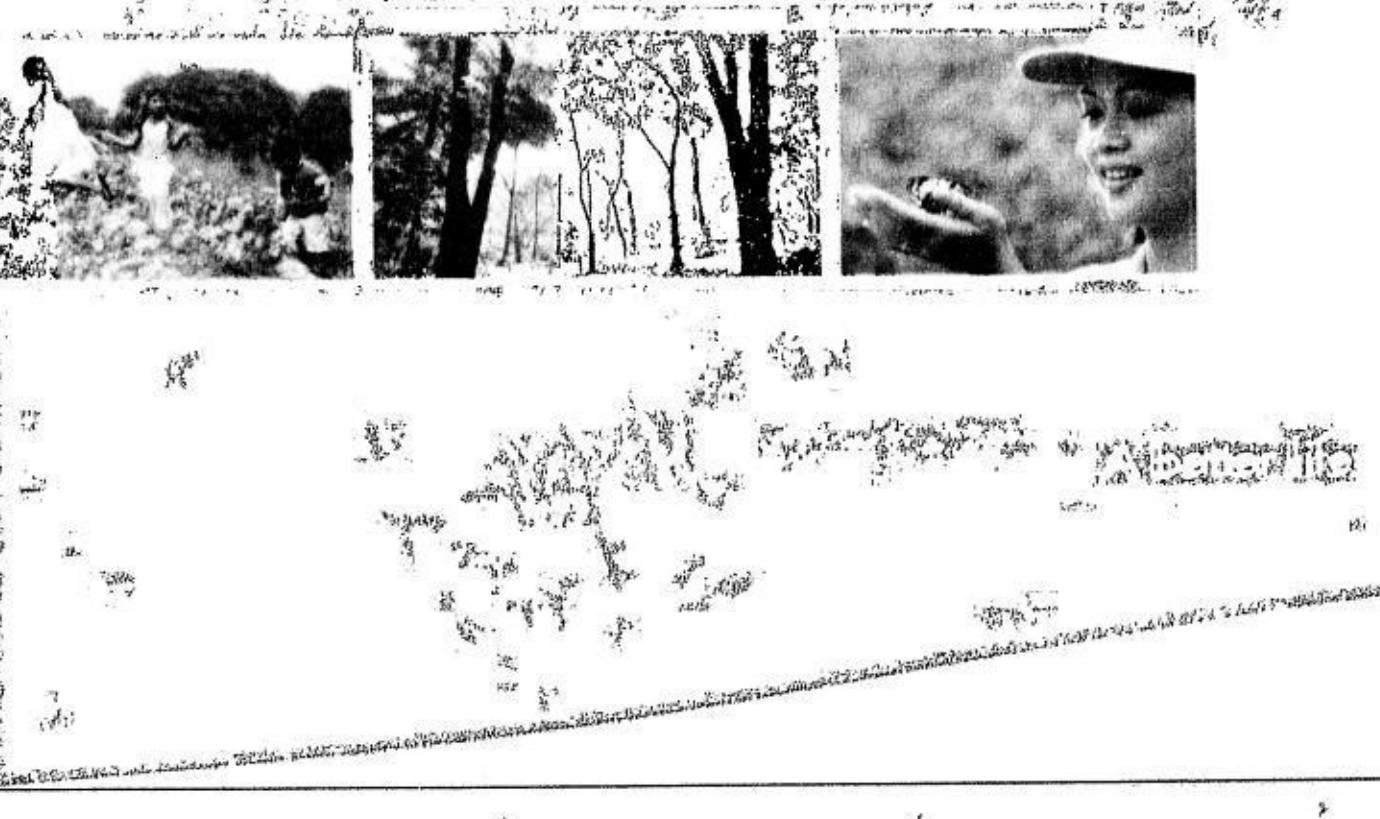
However, some people complicate the situation by mixing other challenges even before addressing the real issue. When you reap bad fruit, don't mix it with the good ones because it will just contaminate the others.

I heard some people say, "Pabayaan na lang and move on." If the Filipino people will not fix what is wrong to begin with, I cannot see any hope for the future. They have to learn change and they have to accept change.—Robert L. Noble (via e-mail)

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Sorsogon town killings alarm execs

IROSIN, SORSOGON—AT LEAST 12 PERSONS have been assassinated in this town over the past eight months in what was described as vendetta killings between government forces and the New People's Army.

The victims were members of the armed forces and the Philippine National Police and those suspected of being supporters of the NPA.

The killings prompted the local government unit to call for a multi-sectoral peace dialogue Tuesday (May 16) to bring back peace

to the town.

Mayor Lilia Gonzales described the situation as alarming and called on all sectors to join in the effort "to bring back peace and to stop the warring groups from turning Irosin into a killing field."

"The situation is now sowing

fear among our people and is already affecting the business sector," she told forum participants that included barangay officials, Church leaders, municipal council members, employees, business men, youth and ordinary citizens.

Gonzales said Irosin is now similar to other areas in the country where government forces and those identified with left-leaning organizations were being killed with impunity.

The killings started on Oct. 23 last year with the assassination of PO3 Jose Canuel, a member of the town's police force, said police

chief Senior Insp. Diony Laceda.

The NPA issued a statement owning responsibility for the killing.

On Oct. 27, a member of the Philippine Army identified as Armando Gervas was killed in an attack believed perpetrated by the NPAs.

Three days later a Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) member, Jaime Gogola, was shot dead inside the town's cockpit while on Nov. 14, the detachment commander of an Army unit in Barangay Gabao, TSgt. Sigura, was killed.

The killings resumed in January with the death of Benito

Guardacasa, a militiaman.

This was followed by the assassination of municipal councilor Max Frivaldo, a member of the militant group Bayan Muna.

In February, another Cafgu member, Armando Gogola, brother of Jaime, was also slain inside the cockpit, and in March a certain Pepe Manzilla was killed.

In April, Sgt. Julie Aliben and Cafgu Allan Tolosa were ambushed in Barangay Gumapia and on May 9, Barangay Captain Neal Futalan of Gabao was assassinated.

The latest killing occurred last

May 15 with the death of Domingo Habla, a former NPA member turned Army personnel.

Fr. Jimmy Barrozo, the town's parish priest, appealed to both sides and to all sectors to help bring back normalcy and peace to the town.

The priest stressed the importance and sanctity of life and the people's basic right to it.

Councilor Isol Michelena, peace and order council chairman, asked the population to cooperate and help the authorities put an end to the spate of killings.

Bobby Labalan

ROUNDUP

Militiamen kill 4

KIAMBIA, Sarangani—At least four people, including a 16-year-old boy, were killed after they were shot by two militiamen in Barangay Tambuli here, police said Thursday. The victims were identified as Ferdinand Alcontin, 27, and his younger brother Antonio, 24; Sasa Mendoza and 16-year-old Ronel Guillermo. The suspects, Erwin Loyloy and Alexander Gamulta, were arrested. Senior Insp. Leo Sua, Kiambia police chief, said the suspects had waylaid the Alcontin brothers on Tuesday evening. The attack was witnessed by Mendoza and Guillermo. Sua said the suspects shot the witnesses. However, Guillermo was still alive and was able to tell relatives who attacked him and the three other victims. The 64-year-old mother of the Alcontin brothers said that on Sunday, the suspects also fired at their house and wounded Ferdinand in the process. She said she could not understand why the militiamen were so angry with his son. *Aquiles Zanio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

8 still missing

ILOILO CITY—Eight crew members of a fishing boat that capsized in Iloilo at the height of tropical storm Caloy remain missing. Search and rescue operations are ongoing in the waters of Masbate for the crew members of fishing boat Marvin, according to reports of the Office of Civil Defense in Western Visayas. The boat capsized in Carles town in Iloilo last week due to strong winds and huge waves. The missing persons were identified as Ruben Colungan, Arniel Bersurto, Rudy Mahinay, Jimbo de Angel, Graniel Cornillo, Jerry Buncad, Nitoy Mangasang and Papagar de Angel. All are residents of Barangay San Fernando on Sicogon Island, in Carles town. *Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau*

Lightning kills boy

CEBU CITY—A 13-year-old boy was killed while his two younger brothers were wounded after they were struck by lightning on Wednesday. The fatality was identified as Welito Toling, of Barangay Canaocanao in Tabogon town, about 93 km north of Cebu City. His younger brothers—Junel, 11 and Galiner, 18 months old—were confined at the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City. Galiner did not suffer any burns because he was tightly embraced by Welito when the lightning struck their house, according to their aunt Rosalinda Abing. Abing, who was attending to the nephews at the hospital, said the brothers were playing in the backyard when the lightning struck them. *Jhunex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Suspected fixer slain

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two motorcycle-riding men shot dead a suspected fixer at the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in front of the Lyceum University in Batangas City on Wednesday. Supt. Nilo Anzo, Batangas City police chief, identified the victim as Vic Rommel Jayson Tolentino, 23, a resident of SWA site, Barangay Kumintang Ibab, Batangas City. Anzo said the victim was walking toward the LTO office at about 7 a.m. when the suspects suddenly approached and shot him before escaping toward the city proper. Anzo said they are looking into the possibility that the killing was related to the victim's alleged job as a fixer at the local LTO office. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Indons arrested

DAVAO CITY—Government security forces in Compostela Valley arrested at least nine Indonesian sailors after the company they work for reported that they hijacked the vessel they were manning. Senior Supt. Nestor Quinsay, Compostela Valley police director, said in April, PT Multi Marita reported that its tugboat, TB Martha Dini, was commandeered by its crew and was suspected to be in

Philippine waters. Quinsay said they have since been on alert for the tugboat and finally intercepted it in Maco town on Tuesday morning. Indonesian Consul Bambang Gunawan told the INQUIRER that the tugboat sailed from North Sumatra and was supposed to be heading for South Kalimantan. "They were supposed to reach South Kalimantan on April 24 but they didn't arrive," Gunawan said. Quinsay said the suspects were brought to the regional police headquarters for investigation. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Piggery burns

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 128 pigs were either roasted or burned alive when a piggery at Barangay Dita here caught fire on Tuesday. The city fire department placed the damage at P500,000. Observers believed the blaze was intentionally carried out since the piggery owned by a certain Manuel Malana had long been complained of for its foul odor. Even so, residents feasted on the roasted

pigs that the owner shared with the villagers. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Motorcycle seats ripped up

LEGAZPI CITY—Still looking for a solution to the series of arson-related fires in this convention city, local public safety officials are facing a new annoying act by mischievous makers. The upholstered seats of at least five motorcycles parked at the Provincial Disaster Operation Center premises were slashed by pranksters on Monday. Two days before, a motorcycle

parked at the parking lot of a city mall suffered similar damage. The suspects have been identified, according to city police chief Supt. Narciso Guarin, but witnesses are needed to pin down the culprits. City officials urged owners of malls and buildings to tighten security. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

38 Pinoys jailed for strike in Saudi back home

BAGUIO CITY—THIRTY-EIGHT overseas Filipino workers who staged a strike against their Saudi Arabia employer have returned home after being detained for four months in Riyadh.

They were released on May 8 after their Manila-based recruitment agency paid 121,600 Saudi (about P1,580,800) to their employer, the Annasban Group.

Most of them came from the Visayas, Metro Manila, Pangasinan, La Union, Isabela, Benguet and Baguio City.

The demand for a return pay was made by Annasban when the Philippine labor attaché mediated for the workers' release, according to Mariel Taguba, one of the returning workers.

In January, 15 of these workers staged a strike when they protested their employer's alleged human rights abuses and breach of job contracts.

The workers were detained at the rooftop of a government building in Riyadh. The following month, the rest of the workers also staged a strike and were detained on the first floor of the same building.

The workers accused their employer of violating their job contracts. They applied as janitors but were made to work as caregivers at a mental hospital in Riyadh, they said.

They also complained of illegal pay deductions, non-payment of overtime pay and

lack of food.

"It was all pain and suffering when we arrived at the hospital. We thought we were going to work as janitors, but when we arrived there ... we were made to work as caregivers," Taguba said in a forum here on Thursday.

"I was shocked and I said 'God, what is happening to us? We just came there to work as janitors.' It was so hard for us because the patients tended to hurt us physically. They would hit our faces and heads," she said.

Regina Gam-an, 25, of Bauko, Mt. Province, said they experienced lack of food while detained by their employer. Other Filipino workers in Riyadh donated food

when they learned about their plight.

Flora Belinan, chair of Mi-grante-Cordillera, said the OFWs were victims of contract substitution.

"They were forced to sign the contract which was written in Arabic and which was not translated to them. As promised by their recruiter, these workers were to have free food, accommodation, free medical and dental expenses and a day holiday in a week. But none of these was fulfilled. The worst thing was that they were not paid their salaries on time thus depriving them of money to buy their own food."

Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Bacolod bishop declares war on signature drive

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE DIOCESE of Bacolod, led by Bishop Vicente Navarra, launched a sustained protest drive against what it called a "fake people's initiative" for Charter change.

Priests and parishioners, during the religious march, carried placards that read "Reject the fake people's initiative," "Oppose the extension of terms of politicians," and "Uphold pro-Filipino, pro-country laws."

The rally would be followed by a massive information dissemination campaign against Cha-cha in the parishes and by a caravan from various parts of the Diocese of Bacolod to culminate with a massive rally at the public plaza on June 12, said Fr. Aniceto Bue- nafe, social action director of the diocese.

Navarra, in a statement issued during the launching, said this was not the time to change the Constitution because the government could not be trusted.

"The move to change the 1987 Constitution now poses a grave danger to our nation and if we do not oppose it we will become part of the wrong that it will cause," Navarra said.

Even if the 1987 Constitution has its defects, it is the offspring of the "people power" revolution where the people regained power from Ferdinand Marcos, he said.

Navarra also pointed out that

despite a Supreme Court ruling that an enabling law was necessary for a people's initiative for Charter change, the administration still endorsed this "deceitful" move.

He also said many of those signing the people's initiative for Charter change did not totally understand what it was about.

"We are opposing Charter change now because of the deceitful manner in which it is being carried out through a people's initiative. It will allow those already in power to remain there, and it will remove the pro-Filipino, pro-country provisions of the 1987 Constitution," Navarra said.

The Cha-cha endorsed by the administration would take the power away from the people and prolong the stay in power of those already there with the planned removal of the limits on terms of office, Navarra said.

Navarra said that those in government should instead have the political will to implement the pro-Filipino, pro-country provisions of the Constitution.

"Filipinos or the government should control the wealth of the nation and foreigners should only infuse 40 percent of the capital in business ventures," he said.

"Division of the wealth of the nation must be for the good of all like agrarian reform. Education should be made affordable, all and the largest share of the budget should go to education, and nationalism and patriotism should be instilled in our students," he added.



ARNOLD ALMACION/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

Marcos money benefitted Cordillera through agri

BAGUIO CITY—PART OF THE MONEY THAT the government had recovered from the ill-gotten wealth of the late President Ferdinand Marcos had funded programs for land reform beneficiaries in the Cordillera, an official of the Department of Agrarian Reform said.

"Here in the Cordillera, the flow of money from the Marcos wealth never stopped. The money went immediately to the agrarian reform fund," Renato Navata, DAR Cordillera director, said in a forum here on Wednesday.

Navata said from January 2005 until April this year, a total of 45 projects were implemented through funds drawn from the recovered Marcos funds.

He said at least P16.95 million had been used to fund projects such as farm to market roads and post-harvest facilities.

The DAR, he said, has been waiting for the release of another P31 million to implement 22 projects this year.

He said the funds' release was the response to proposals submitted by local government units to DAR in 2004.

Navata said former Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, in 2003, had issued a directive to DAR's regional offices asking them to solicit agrarian reform-related project proposals from local governments.

Pagdanganan, in past reports, said the government had allotted P30 billion for agrarian reform-related projects such as the construction of farm to market roads, agricultural fa-

cilities, land payment and school buildings in remote villages.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangam-daman, in an interview here last month, denied reports that the recovered Marcos funds were inappropriately used.

Navata said the biggest chunk of funds for agrarian reform projects in the Cordillera still came from foreign funding agencies.

He said foreign funding agencies had given the regional DAR P210.75 million for the construction of farm to market roads, post-harvest facilities and water systems.

Julio Ocufo, division chief of the support services of DAR Cordillera, said the DAR has used part of the Marcos funds as counterpart for foreign-assisted projects.

Navata said the DAR is implementing the third phase of the agrarian reform infrastructure support project under the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Navata said DAR is also set to distribute 1,900 hectares of farmlands to agrarian reform beneficiaries in the region. Last year, 3,000 hectares of farmlands were distributed to 2,712 beneficiaries, he said. Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Davao-based cult leader says he's not afraid of controversial movie

DAVAO CITY—CULT LEADER APOLLO QUIBOLY has endorsed the movie adaptation of fictionist Dan Brown's controversial book "The Da Vinci Code," saying he was confident it would not shake his followers' faith.

Quiboloy, who has described himself as the "Son of God," said he would not stop his followers if they want to see the film.

Quiboloy founded the Davao-based Christian movement Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Name above every name, which operates a satellite television station and several radio stations. The group has membership all over the world.

"Let it come. I am sure that my people's faith will not be shattered by one film. My faith is solid, my people's faith in God is solid. Let it come," he said over his regular program on ACQ-KBN, his group's flagship satellite TV station.

Quiboloy's endorsement came in the wake of efforts by some Christian groups to have the film banned in the country.

Even the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), known for espousing a conservative form of Islamic practice, had called for the banning of the film saying it is "anti-religion."

The Palace also seemed to have taken the position of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who considers the movie blasphemous and that it should not be shown in Philippine theaters.

Ermita even issued an unsolicited advice to the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to exercise prudence by not allowing the screening of the film.

The MTRCB approved the film's showing and gave it an R-18 rating.

Quiboloy smirked at those who opposed the showing of the film and accused them of having weak faith and being "religiously insecure."

"Those who are against the film only show that they are not so sure about their faith. They are not confident about it that they think it will be destroyed by this film. This only goes to show, too, that even if the Philippines is a Christian country, the faith of the people is not that (tight) yet," Quiboloy said.

In the movie, Jesus married Mary Magdalene, a union that started a supposedly secret bloodline.

It also showed how Opus Dei, a conservative Christian group, tried to keep this secret for so long.

But Quiboloy said he does not care if the marriage was real. Jeffrey Tupas, PDI M. Bureau

Waves threaten 500 Ilocos families

LAOAG CITY—BIG WAVES INDUCED BY winds brought about by tropical storm Caloy on Wednesday forced nearly 500 families in the coastal towns of Pagudpud and Pasuquin to seek safer grounds.

At least 75 families in Pagudpud and 385 families in Pasuquin living near the coast moved to higher grounds when high waves began swamping their homes.

The weather station at the Laoag International Airport said Ilocos Norte had experienced unusually strong winds since Wednesday that were spawned by Caloy.

Cynthia Iglesia, the station's chief meteorologist, advised residents in the coastal villages to stay in safer grounds while wind blows were unusually strong because, she said, high waves could still be generated by this weather condition.

The station said strong winds had pro-

duced waves as high as five meters and a high tide of one meter.

Big waves also struck some coastal villages in Ilocos Sur on May 16.

"We are looking at similar conditions both in Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte. This condition may still persist because winds are unusually strong and lasting for long hours," Iglesia said.

"When strong wind blows combine with the high tide, seawater caused by high waves piles up at the shoreline and cannot immediately retreat back to the sea," she said.

Social workers from the provincial government who brought relief goods to Pasuquin on Wednesday noted that seawater had reached the town's highway.

Pasuquin and Pagudpud are exposed to the South China Sea and are nearer to Caloy's path, weathermen said. Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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NBI probes politicians, leftists behind fish scare

LEGAZPI CITY—THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation said it would look into the source of a hoax that caused a fish scare in Sorsogon and loss of income for the province's fishermen and determine if politicians and leftist organizations should be held accountable for it.

Lawyer Tomas Enrile, head of the NBI Bicol district office, said it was possible that some politicians and militant groups were behind the fish scare that deprived fishermen of income in Sorsogon and in Rapu-Rapu, Albay; site of Lafayette Philippines Inc.'s (LPI) mining operations.

Enrile told members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Albay (SPA) in its session last week that his team was taking the issue seriously. If there was indeed a hoax, its (NBI) findings would have implications on national security, he said.

The SPA sought the investigation after reports of cyanide and mercury contamination triggered the fish scare in Sorsogon.

Enrile said the bureau was now establishing the identities of the groups that submitted certain fish samples for testing and used the results to scare the people from eating fish.

"There seems to be a deliberate effort to get bad results that was used to scare the public," Enrile said.

Initial NBI findings showed the fish samples were transported on a Philtranco bus and brought to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Manila for analysis.

The BFAR conducted tests on the samples and released its findings, which were then used by antimining groups as evidence that Lafayette's mining project caused the contamination of water and fish in the coastal areas of Sorsogon.

About 5,000 fishermen suffered losses as a result of the fish scare.

Five studies done later by the BFAR and two by the UP National Science Research Institute showed that the fish and water samples from Sorsogon were within tolerable levels and fit for human consumption.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau Bicol director Reynulfo Juan said the Multi-Tripartite Monitoring Committee was finalizing its report to be submitted to Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez, the report confirmed that the waters in Albay Gulf and Sorsogon were now free from chemical contamination.

Earlier, Tanggol Kalikasan took up the cudgels for the fishermen by filing court charges against Lafayette.

In the May 9 session of the SPA, Board Member Jose Saribong, committee on environment chair, moved for a favorable endorsement of the restart of Lafayette's mining operations.

Other members of the council, however, said there was already a previous understanding on record to wait for the Rapu-Rapu Fact-Finding Commission's report before the SPA acts on the endorsement.

Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



SAFETY DRILL NINO JESUS ORBETA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
A man in crutches joins a tsunami drill, the first ever in the country, in Sto. Domingo, Albay. The drill was the first to be held to test a tsunami warning system in the Pacific Ocean that has been in place for years but was never tested.

Doc quits amid probe of drug overprice

DAVAO CITY—A RANKING health executive in Compostela Valley province resigned amid allegations he was involved in the overpricing of medicines the provincial government bought in 2004.

The anomaly was being investigated by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

But Dr. Jose Eulalio Dujali, Montevista District Hospital Chief, said his resignation has nothing to do with the allegations.

"I just feel it's about time that I should devote my full time to private practice," Dujali said.

Dujali, along with Gov. Jose Caballero, provincial administrator Anesio Ranario and provincial budget officer Joel Retero were being accused of jacking up the amount of the 2004 medicine purchase for the hospital by as much as 1,200 percent.

Caballero has denied any wrongdoing saying he signed the purchase order because it was his duty and that he believed it was in order.

Caballero said the local audit office had supported his position and had cleared him of any wrongdoing.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, the Commission on Audit based in Nabunturan, Compostela Valley, said "the purchase request is valid and order" and "that the purchase order to San Marino was found to have substantially complied with all the rules and regulations."

The COA also said the prices reflected in the purchase order were the prices found in the bid tender of San Marino Laboratories Corp., "the lone complying and responsive bidder determined by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)."

It also said that the purchase of various drugs and medicines from San Marino, which amounted to more than P587,000, was "made in accordance with the provisions of R.A. 9184."

But the Sangguniang Panlalawigan said despite this, the four "offending" officials would be charged at the Ombudsman.

Bert Pacate and Dennis Jay Santos with a report from Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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All Lyceum Law alumni are cordially invited to a **Testimonial Dinner** in honor of the successful examinees and the Faculty on Monday, 22 May 2006, 6:30 pm at the **Hyatt, Malate, Manila**. To reserve a dinner seat, please call Mel /Lucky at 893-9299 or text Leanard (0917-6244176) or Mei-Lin (0906-2867970).

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Journalist to sue dad for attack in San Pablo

CALAMBA CITY—A MEMBER OF the San Pablo City council is in hot water after he physically assaulted a host of a local TV program and columnist of weekly tabloid while the council was in session on Tuesday.

Councilor Edgardo Adajar was caught on video while he was attacking journalist Iring Maranan just outside the session hall at the eight floor of the new city hall building at about 11:30 a.m.

Maranan hosts "Sapul, Walang Sablay" program on Channel 17 of the local cable network in San Pablo and writes a column for the weekly tabloid "Ratsada Balita."

He was an ardent critic of alleged anomalies at the city government which led him to file administrative and criminal charges at the Ombudsman against Adajar and 13 others, including Mayor Vicente Amante, Vice Mayor Lauro Vidal and seven other city councilors, last year.

The case stemmed from a supposed highly irregular land deal which, he said, cost the local government millions of pesos.

Speaking with the INQUIRER over his mobile phone, Maranan said he felt insulted and degraded by the attack.

According to his account, he was with fellow journalist Dodie Banzuela and was supposed to cover the regular session of the city council when they were barred from entering the session hall by a city hall employee.

He said moments later, an angry Adajar went out of the session hall and charged at him while shouting invectives.

"Adajar was furious. He was trying to drag me inside the session hall," Maranan said.

He said Adajar cursed him and



even placed his arm around his neck as the councilor dragged him inside the session hall. "Then he kicked me."

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Adajar to get his reaction.

Maranan, a member of the Laguna chapter of the National Union of Journalist of the Philippines (NUJP), said the incident was witnessed by about 100 people, including other San Pablo-based journalists.

He said a sister of Adajar was also cursing him while the councilor was beating him up.

He said he tried not to fight back because he was an elected official."

"I said to myself that I will not stoop down to his level," Maranan said.

Adajar only stopped when a policeman interceded, Maranan said.

After the attack, Maranan went to the local police station and reported the attack. Marlon Ramos,

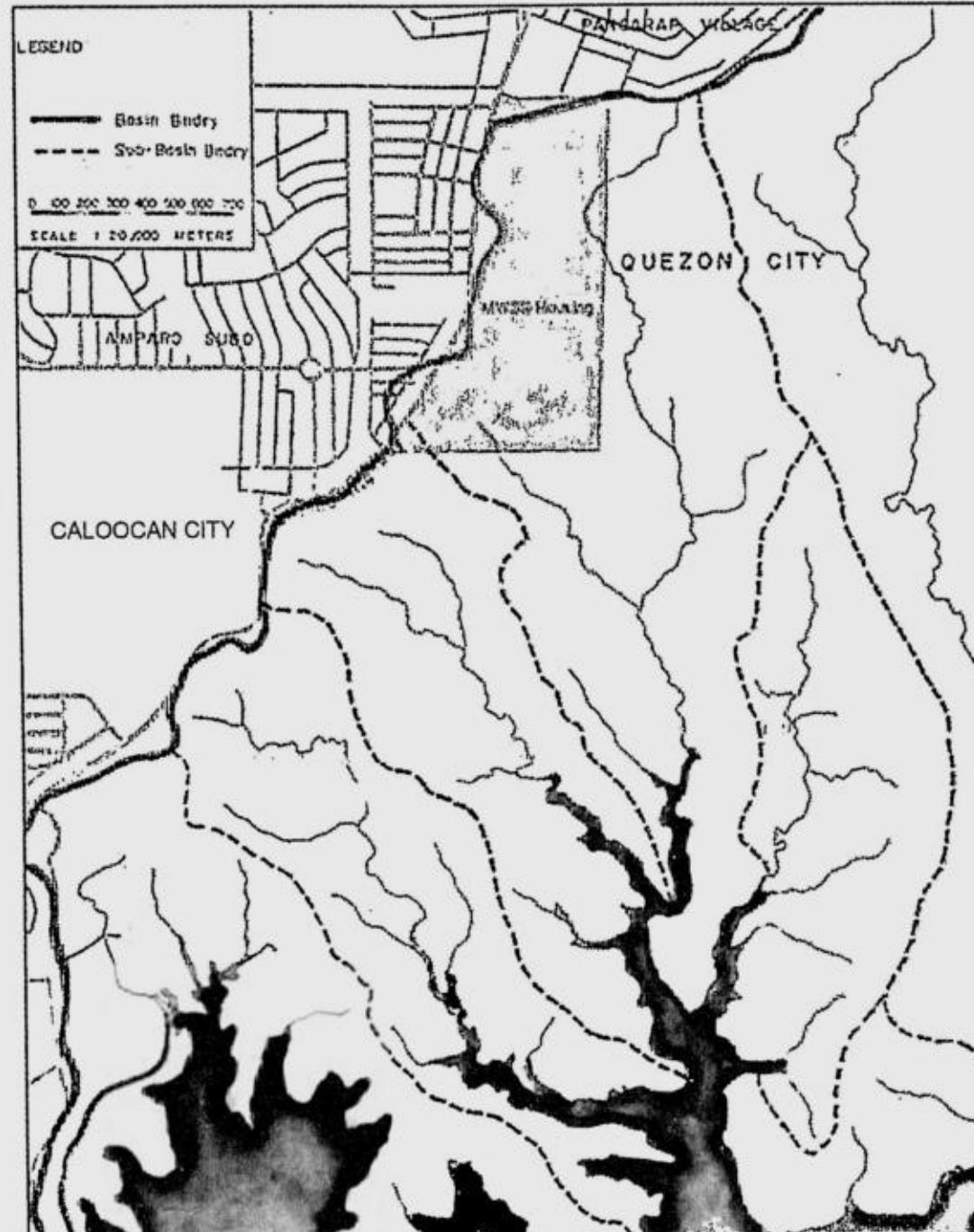
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PRESERVE THE LA MESA WATERSHED!

We the undersigned, acting for and in behalf of the 12 million inhabitants of Metro Manila, and representing various organizations concerned with a sustainable future for the next generations of Filipinos yet unborn, hereby come together and declare that:

- We uphold the right of Filipino households in Metropolitan Manila to have unimpeded access to clean drinking water.
- We strongly advocate the protection and preservation of the La Mesa Reservoir, as one of the largest alternative water sources of Metro Manila.
- We strongly oppose the privatization of the 59-hectare portion of the La Mesa Reservation Area, for the purpose of establishing housing units therein, on the basis of a 2004 scientific and technical findings of the National Hydraulic Research Center UP College of Engineering, which recommended that "It would be in the best interest of the MWSS and the General Public who eventually utilize from drinking the water in the La Mesa Reservoir that the 58-hectares of the La Mesa Watershed area being proposed for the MWSS Housing Project REMAIN A PROTECTED WATERSHED AREA AND NOT BE CONVERTED TO A HOUSING PROJECT AREA".
- We strongly object to the endangerment of the largest remaining forest of its size in Metro Manila located adjacent to a vital water resource combined with the water from Angat and IPO Dams, considered to be among the top three of the largest sources of drinking water in Southeast Asia;
- We seek to uphold the integrity of the water supply of Metro Manila which is in clear and imminent danger of contamination if the MWSS employee housing development is established in the planned site;
- We call on all residents of Metro Manila to join us in asserting our right to clean water and healthy environment, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines;
- The preservation of the Metro Manila's largest remaining forest located at the La Mesa Watershed and the protection of a critical source of drinking water for 12 million inhabitants of Metro Manila is our responsibility;
- We call on the government and the MWSS management to exhaust all means to put an end to the 38-year plight of deserving awardees/claimants of the 59-hectare land and provide a viable location for the housing project, without prejudicing the inalienable rights of millions of residents of Metro Manila to clean water and livable environment.

We urge the Government to declare the La Mesa Watershed a Protected area!



Proposed MWSS Housing Project at the La Mesa Watershed

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Da Vinci movie: 'A thriller, not a historical document'

From page A1

Tatou), Langdon must evade shadowy elements of the Church's Opus Dei sect, who want the secret of the grail to remain secret.

The movie is directed by Ron Howard, a crowd-pleasing filmmaker who won a Best Director Oscar for "A Beautiful Mind." With such talents working on "The Da Vinci Code" in front of and behind the cameras, there was some hope that the film would intelligently handle the book's more sensitive aspects.

And so it has. The film Howard made is very faithful to the book, a handsome, gripping adaptation of the bestseller. Scriptwriter Akiva Goldsman does an impressive job retaining the essential points of the novel in the two-and-a-half-hour film.

Howard's direction is focused and intelligent, but not flawless. The scenes where Hanks is deciphering codes, showing words lighting up in his mind to catch his attention, are reminiscent of the director's own Oscar-winner "A Beautiful Mind," which employed the same technique.

Goose bumps

And a scene where Hanks and Tatou are about to be shot while in a van is confusingly edited, such that the audience is left wondering how they were saved.

The flashbacks showing the

dawn of Christianity, however, are magnificently filmed, showing sweeping views of magnificent temples and hundreds of extras in exquisite costumes. And the final shot, which shows Hanks at the Louvre, will surely induce goose bumps.

As Howard has stated, his "Da Vinci Code" movie is a thriller, not a historical document. Its objective is to entertain moviegoers, not discredit Church teaching. And yet the Church has blasted the book and movie anyway, calling them blasphemous.

Among the more interesting concepts which didn't make it to the movie are a more detailed discussion of the Sacred Feminine, and the suggestion that Walt Disney himself was obsessed with Mary Magdalene, alluding to her in his animated movies.

Acting standout

The acting standout is McKellen as the grail expert who articulates the film's most controversial ideas. When he says lines like, "What if the greatest story ever told was a lie?" you can't help but listen.

As the code-decipherer Langdon, Hanks is fine but you can't help but wonder what a better-looking actor would have been like in the role (the book describes Langdon as looking like Harrison Ford).

In the pivotal role of Sophie, Tatou is serviceable but not par-

ticularly memorable. The best thing that can be said of her work here is that she shows no trace of the wide-eyed "Amelie," the role in the movie of the same name that made her an international star.

Brown's skills

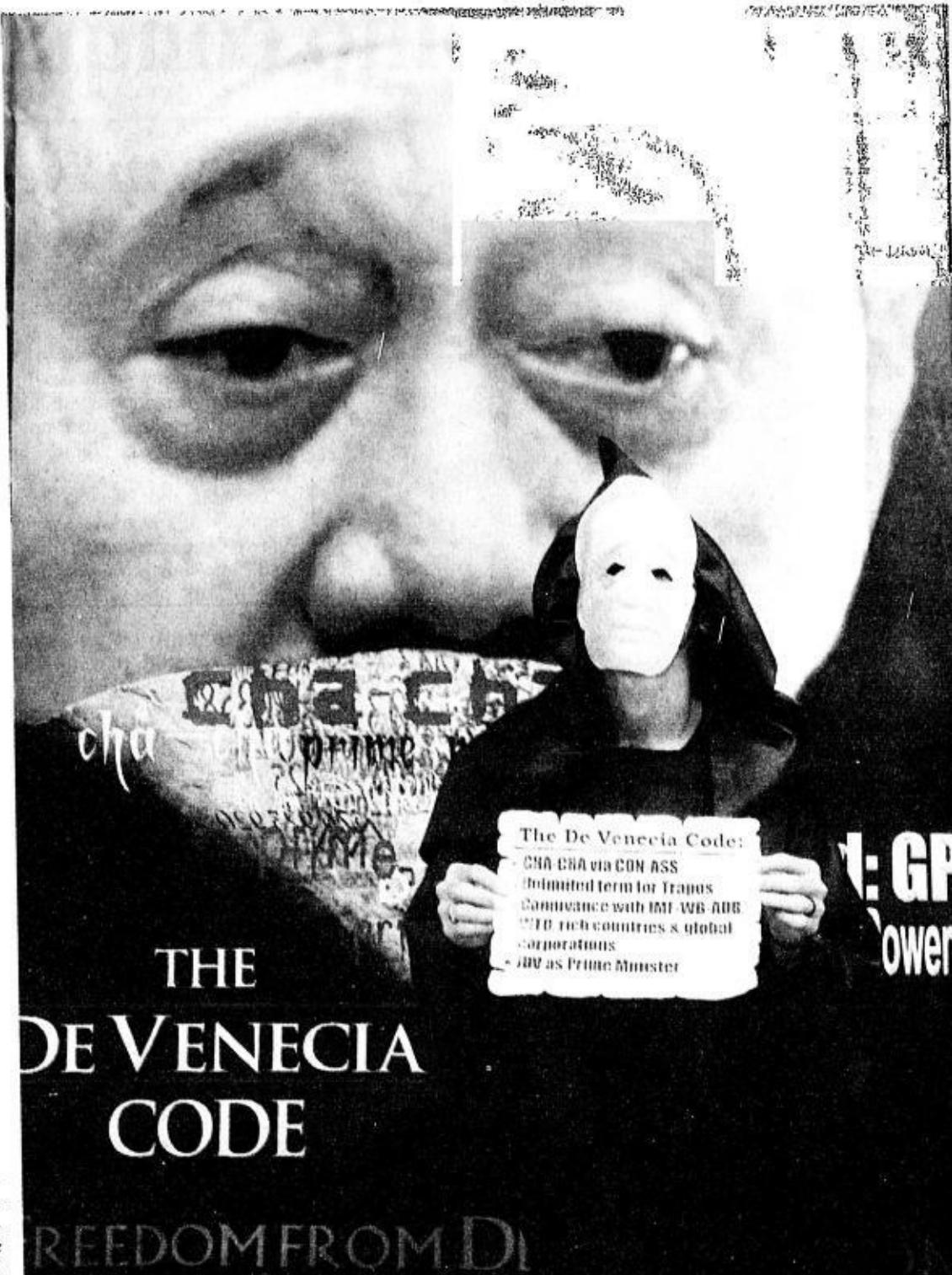
Why all the fuss over a fictional story? It's because Brown skillfully used real artwork, documents, buildings and people in his book, which has been read by an estimated 75 million people worldwide.

How could readers not think "The Da Vinci Code" was real, considering that Jesus Christ, Leonardo Da Vinci and Isaac Newton are as real as the Mona Lisa painting, the Louvre Museum and the Opus Dei?

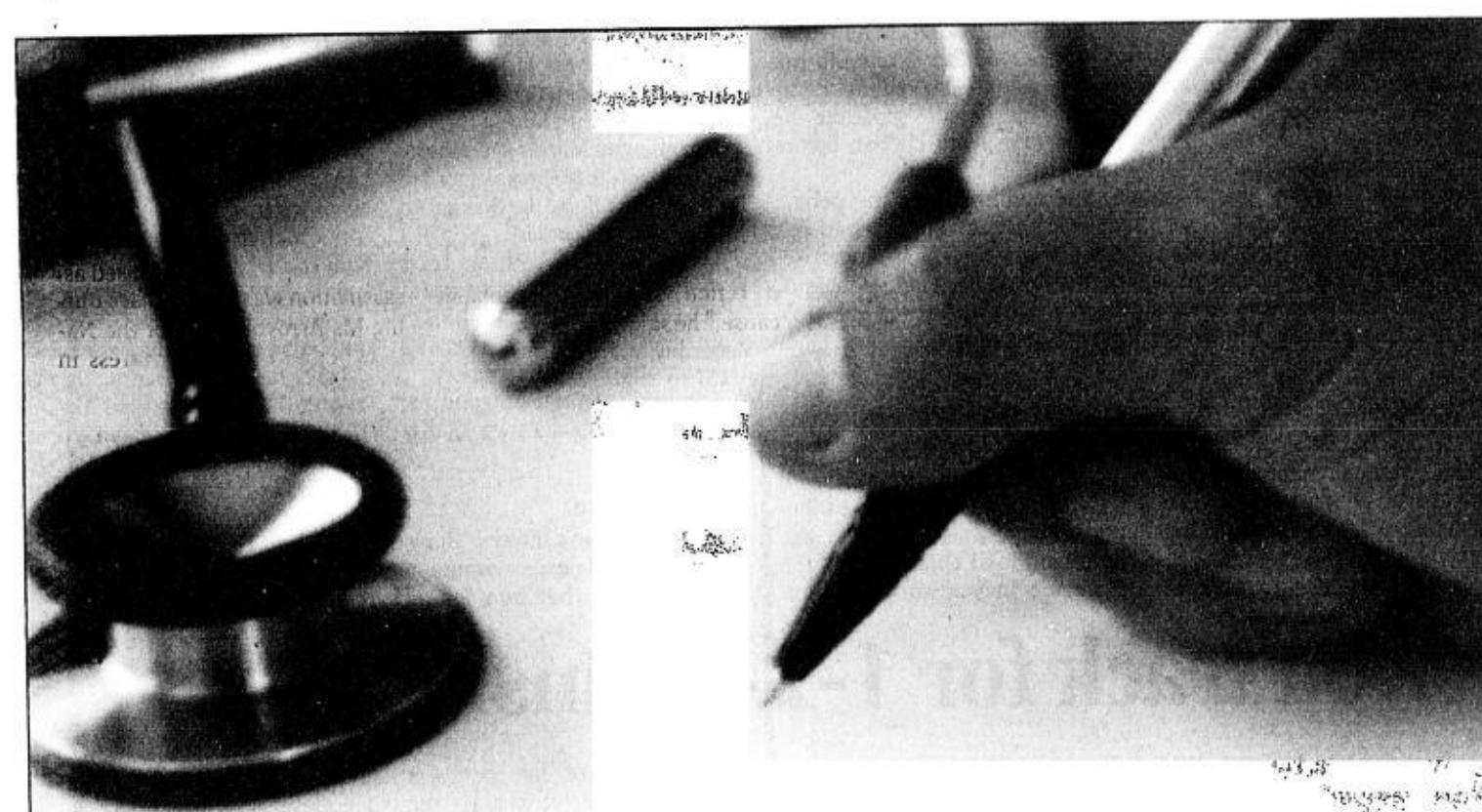
It's because of Brown's wonderful interweave of art, history, and language that readers believe that the theories he presents in his book are real.

Yes, that does look like a woman to the left of Jesus Christ in Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. And yes, it does make sense that the Church would want to conceal word about Christ marrying Mary Magdalene and having a child with her, if such a thing happened.

Will "The Da Vinci Code" cause some Christians to question some of their beliefs? Definitely. Will they abandon their faith because of this movie? If they do, then they couldn't have been very good Catholics to begin with.



MOVIE IN RP POLITICS: Freedom from Debt Coalition rally in front of the Batasan Pambansa to protest the so-called "trapos" subservience to the Palace-De Venecia-backed code on the Constituent Assembly. JOAN BONDOC



No shame in being called GMA lapdog but ...

From page A1

a new opposition bid to impeach the President.

"I remain loyal to the President for as long as my loyalty jibes with my loyalty to my people. If it does not, I will remain loyal to my people," he said on Wednesday.

That loyalty to the President seemed to be unraveling after Cagas learned that Malacañang was considering removing a provision in the proposed 2006 national budget requiring consultations with district representatives before energy, agriculture and agrarian reform projects were implemented.

Catastrophe

Cagas said during the House plenary session that deleting this provision would be a "catastrophe" for congressmen.

"You better wake up," he said. "Everything that we did in the last budget will go to the mayors and the governors ... I am afraid that my people will convince me to sign the impeachment if I cannot stop what is going to happen."

Cagas said that during the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council meeting in Malacañang on Monday, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda informed him that the Palace wanted the controversial provision removed.

This means that congressmen would be deprived of largesse from juicy infrastructure projects.

Betrayed

He said he felt "betrayed ... betrayed by this administration ... betrayed by the leadership of this House."

With this development, Cagas said that he would not hesitate in signing the impeachment complaint the opposition said it would refile when the next Congress session opens in July.

Last year, administration supporters in the House killed a similar move to unseat the President over allegations she stole the 2004 presidential election—a charge she has vehemently denied but does not go away.

On Wednesday, opposition House Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico of Iloilo said disgruntled administration supporters were urging him to refile the impeachment complaint im-



CAGAS feeling betrayed.



SUPLICO asked to name names.

mediately, hoping the move would usher in an early Christmas.

Palace promises not kept

Suplico said cash, projects and appointments to government posts that the Palace reportedly promised in exchange for casting a no vote to the impeachment complaint last year had not materialized and had resulted in so much unhappiness.

Yesterday, Surigao Rep. Prospero Pichay challenged Suplico to name names. "We challenge him to put up or shut up."

Even so, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel advised the House opposition not to bother with another impeachment case against Ms. Arroyo.

"Not because Gloria is not guilty. She is guilty of practically all violations of the Constitution and she should be impeached," Pimentel said.

"But considering the track record of the House, if we go into another round of impeachment, it will also be an opportunity for selling and buying of votes, so why go through that charade?" With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Juliet Labog-Javellana

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b. Mail

The entry should be mailed to MEDICard Philippines, Inc. 9/F World Center Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave, Makati City 1209. The entry should have a postmark dated May 25, 2006 or earlier and should reach the MEDICard office by June 3, 2006 to qualify. The words "MEDICard Essay Writing Contest/Philippine Daily Inquirer" should be prominently written at the back.

c. E-mail

The entry must be e-mailed to essays@medicardphils.com by May 30, 2006 to qualify. The subject must indicate "Essay Writing Contest/Philippine Daily Inquirer".

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City of Manila bans 'Da Vinci Code'

From page A1

married Mary Magdalene and fathered children whose descendants have survived to the present day has sparked accusations of blasphemy not only from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines but also from other Christian groups across the globe.

Earlier this week, however, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) allowed the film to be shown but gave it an R-18 rating, meaning it is restricted to adults.

According to Valeriano, cinema owners in Manila who defy the ban face a one-year jail term and a P5,000 fine. Those caught selling pirated DVDs or VCDs of the movie could be jailed for up to six months and fined P3,000, he added.

City's sentiment

"This is the sentiment of the city of Manila," said Councilor Benjamin Asilo, a coauthor of the resolution.

"The film made erroneous and unsubstantiated claims against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity," Asilo said, adding that the people behind the movie "should not be allowed to enrich themselves at the expense of desecrating our religious institutions and impairing our relationship with our God."

Councilor Ma. Asuncion Fugoso (District 3), one of those who approved the resolution, said she was withholding judgment on the film.

"It's not for me to judge, I know it's just fiction, but why use the name of Christ?" Fugoso said.

Councilor Cita Astals opposed the resolution, saying that she was for freedom of expression. She described Brown's book as "excellent" so that "once you start reading it, you'll not put it down."

"If your faith is strong, any movie that depicts Jesus as Satan will not affect you. But if your faith is weak, any movie will not save you," Astals added.

Councilor Lourdes Isip-Garcia, who also opposed the ban, said the movie "is fiction, just for entertainment."

Not a sin

Fr. James Reuter, director of the Catholic Church's National Office of the Mass Media, said it wasn't a sin to see the movie.

"Rome, in general, has condemned it ... (But) the Holy Father has not made it a sin if you watch it," Reuter told the INQUIRER on Tuesday.

In France, director Ron Howard had a suggestion for people riled by the way Christian history was depicted in the movie: If you think the movie will upset you, don't go see it.

"There's no question that the film is likely to be upsetting to some people," Howard told reporters at the Cannes Film Festival on Wednesday. "My advice, since virtually no one has really seen the movie yet, is to not go see the movie if you think you're going to be upset. Wait. Talk to somebody who has seen it. Discuss it. And then arrive at an opinion about the movie itself."

"Again: This is supposed to be entertainment, it's not theology," he said.

The movie suggests that Jesus Christ was married to Mary Magdalene and fathered a child. One reporter asked the cast if they believed Christ was married.

Star Tom Hanks quipped, "Well, I wasn't around." With reports from Nikko Dizon and AP



LIVING UP TO ITS PUBLICITY: "Da Vinci" opens to the expected long lines at the box office, this one at Rockwell in Makati City, with a lot of thanks to the controversy.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



THE "DA VINCI" STARS behind and in front of the cameras at the 59th International Film Festival in Cannes, France, on Wednesday. "Da Vinci" opened across the globe on Thursday. From left, producer Brian Grazer, director Ron Howard, actors Tom Hanks and Audrey Tatou and author Dan Brown.

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Conference Program

22 May 2006

- ★ OPENING MESSAGE: "HOUSING AS A BASIC NEED AND AN ASSET: IMPLICATIONS TO BUSINESS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY"
- ★ PLenary Session 1: THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: WHAT THE NUMBERS REALLY MEAN TO BUSINESS
- ★ LUNCHEON TOPIC: GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO BOOST PHILIPPINE BUSINESS
- ★ PANEL DISCUSSION 1: HOMEGROWN STRATEGIES FOR BEATING THE ODDS AND TAKING THE LEAD
- ★ PLenary Session 2: HOW BIG BUSINESSES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOCIETY
- ★ RE-LAUNCHING OF ECOP'S RECOGNITION OF CHILD-FRIENDLY FIRMS PROGRAM
- ★ PANEL DISCUSSION 2: TALENT MANAGEMENT: WIN SOME, LOSE SOME... DELIBERATELY

23 May 2006

- ★ PLenary Session 3: SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES, TOOLS & STRATEGIES THAT WORK
 - Appreciative Inquiry
 - Balanced Scorecard
 - Contemporary Working: New World of Work
- ★ PLenary Session 4: LABOR POLICY FOR PHILIPPINE COMPETITIVENESS
- ★ ADOPTION OF CONFERENCE RESOLUTION
- ★ PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Fellowship Program

Exhibit

Registration Fees

Category	Fee
A. Individual	Php 5,000
B. Group (min. of 10 pax)	Php 4,500
A. Individual	Php 5,000
B. Group (min. of 10 pax)	Php 5,000

Time mag writer placed on government watch list

From page A1

magazine indicating that a group of military and civilian personalities were planning to "withdraw support" from Ms Arroyo to jump-start an uprising.

Among those in the supposed meeting were Council of Philippine Affairs convenor Pastor "Boy" Saycon and former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, now president of the Philippine Olympic Committee and Ms Arroyo's adviser on food security.

Both Saycon and Cojuangco have denied the report.

Sindayen's testimony is key to unmasking those behind the failed coup, Gonzalez said. But he expressed fears that the journalist might flee the country rather than answer a summons from the National Bureau of Investigation.

"She won't be arrested, but she must cooperate. We're not asking for anything except for the truth. We just want to talk to her," Gonzalez said in an interview.

According to the Time report, Sindayen witnessed the meeting at Cojuangco's house, "where plans were being hatched for what one of the ringleaders called a 'withdrawal of support' from President Arroyo."

"More than a dozen middle-level officials and businessmen were at the meeting, which went well past one in the morning," the report said.

3 gov't execs involved

Gonzalez's order to include Sindayen in the BI watch list came amid a supposed "breakthrough" in the NBI investigation.

Three middle-ranking government officials have been found to be involved in the destabilization, Gonzalez said. He refused to identify the three officials, but he admitted that they were from the executive branch.

"The NBI report is not completed. We want to know why they were in that meeting. We will file charges against these individuals if I find that there's probable cause," he said.

Yesterday, Gonzalez ordered the NBI to step up its investiga-

tion. Sindayen's testimony, he said, would help the bureau fill in the gaps in its report on the alleged coup attempt to the DOJ.

The secretary said Cojuangco was not yet off the hook despite the fact that no charges had been lodged against him by the government.

Gonzalez said he also wanted to know why the group of alleged conspirators would invite an international media member in carrying out their plans to overthrow the Arroyo administration.

"For what purpose? They must be quite certain that the government would fall that night," he said.

Standing by story

The NBI had earlier invited Saycon, Cojuangco and Sindayen for questioning regarding the Time article. Sindayen instead submitted a letter through a lawyer, saying that she was standing by her story.

Saycon and Cojuangco have said no meeting ever took place at the latter's house. They claimed, however, that they discussed preparations for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of EDSA I to be held the following day.

Assassination plot

In the same interview yesterday, Gonzalez disclosed an alleged plan by leftist groups to assassinate him and the President, citing intelligence reports of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (Nica) through National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

"This is a serious threat. He (Gonzales) alerted me last week during a Nica meeting in Quezon City. That's why (Director) General (Arturo) Lomibao provided me with a bullet-proof car. I've been using it since last month. You have to be fatalistic," he said. Lomibao heads the Philippine National Police.

Gonzalez said the supposed assassination was to take place during Ms Arroyo's State of the Nation Address before Congress in July.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Department Circular No. DC2006-05-006

Adopting Further Amendments to the WESM Rules

Whereas, Rule 8.6.1 of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) Rules provide for the approval by the Department of Energy (DOE) of proposals for any WESM rules changes upon endorsement by the PEM Board;

Whereas, on December 20, 2005, the Interim Rules Change Committee has approved a resolution endorsing for approval before the PEM Board changes in the WESM Rules pertaining to the provisions on the over-riding constraints and the determination of market prices;

Whereas, after discussion, the PEM Board has resolved on January 19, 2006 to approve for endorsement to the Department of Energy (DOE) the abovementioned changes to the WESM Rules;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to its authority under the WESM Rules, the DOE hereby issues, adopts and promulgates the following amendments to the WESM Rules.

A. Amendments to the WESM Rules

1. Rule 3.5.13.1 is amended to read -

Subject to clause 3.5.13.3, the System Operator may require the Market Operator to impose constraints on the power flow, demand, energy generation of a specific facility in the Grid to address system security threat, to mitigate the effects of a system emergency, or to address the need to dispatch generating units to comply with systems, regulatory and commercial tests requirements. The System Operator may also relax existing constraints or system requirements on power flows, demand, energy generation and reserves if the Market Operator is unable to produce a feasible dispatch schedule. The System Operator, in consultation with the Market Operator and the Trading Participants, shall develop the criteria and procedures for dispatch of generating units that are required to run as a result of the imposition or relaxation of constraints stated in the preceding paragraph, and the manner for compensating said units.

2. Rule 3.5.13.2 is amended to read -

In situations where offers are structured in such a way that provision of any level of reserve services prohibits the simultaneous provision of very low or high levels of generation, the System Operator may also recommend to the Market Operator that constraints should be imposed or relaxed so as to allow generating systems to operate in a range which allows increase of either reserve allocation or energy generation, as appropriate, having regard to:

(a) The commercial interests of Trading Participants; and

(b) Market priorities and objectives, as reflected by the relevant market prices for energy and reserves in the relevant reserve region.

3. Rule 3.10.5 is amended to read -

In the event where no ex-ante prices can be determined or communicated within the timeframe specified by the timetable, or the calculated prices are believed to be in error, as a result of load shedding, occurrence of constraint violation coefficients, or for any other reason:

(a) The Market Operator may, as soon as possible after the end of a trading interval, issue a pricing error notice, in which case, the ex-post quantities and the ex post prices determined according to clause 3.10.7 shall also serve as ex-ante quantities and ex-ante prices. If no ex-post prices can be determined or the calculated prices are believed to be in error as a result of the imposition or relaxation of constraints pursuant to clause 3.5.13.1, the Market Operator shall re-run the Market Dispatch Optimization Model.

B. Effectivity

These amendments shall be effective fifteen (15) days following its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

(Sgd) Raphael P. M. Lotilla
Secretary

Metro Manila, Philippines, May 5, 2006

IPI-1 May 19, 2006



PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Singapore Belen Fule-Anota (center) with Edwin Aguilar, husband of Guen Aguilar, leave the Supreme Court. AFP

Pinay convicted in Singapore chop-chop slay

SINGAPORE—A FILIPINA maid was convicted Thursday of culpable homicide not amounting to murder for the killing of a fellow domestic worker whose head and limbs were found in a smart Singapore shopping area.

Guen Aguilar, 30, escaped the death penalty for killing and chopping up 27-year-old compatriot Jane La Puebla when her murder charge was reduced due to her mental state.

"In the circumstances, I convict you of the charge you face," said High Court Judge V.K. Rajah.

Sentencing was set for May 29. Aguilar faces possible life imprisonment or a jail term of up to 10 years.

But lead defense lawyer Shashi Nathan argued for a sentence of less than 10 years, citing Aguilar's mental state at the time of the killing and her remorse during the seven months she has been in prison.

"We make our strongest submission to your honor that Guen certainly does not deserve a life sentence," Nathan told the judge.

No excuse

"She knows that what she did was wrong and that there is no excuse for her misdeeds. However, she is genuinely remorseful for what she has done."

A letter from Roque Versoza, the mayor of Aguilar's northern Philippine home town of Tagudin, was also read in court.

The letter appealed on humanitarian grounds for Aguilar to be spared a long prison sentence. It said her two sons in the Philippines were unaware their mother is in prison and think she is still working as a maid.

Aguilar, wearing an orange prison suit, looked somber and tearful as the verdict was read out. Her husband, Edwin, and sister, Joy, were among those in the court along with Philippine Embassy officials and the mayor.

She was arrested hours after the severed head and limbs of La Puebla were found in a sports bag in the upmarket Orchard Road area on Sept. 9. The victim's torso was later discovered at a nature park.

Fight over money

Court documents showed that the two had an argument inside Aguilar's room at her employers' flat over 2,000 Singapore dollars (1,274 US) she had lent the victim, part of which was borrowed from a loan shark.

It escalated into a fight during which Aguilar covered La Puebla's face with a cushion until she became unconscious. She then strangled her and placed the body inside a luggage bag.

Two days later, on Sept. 9, she bought gloves, a chopper and an axe, cut the body into pieces and made two separate trips on a taxi to dispose of them. Her employers were out when the crime took place.

Consultant psychiatrist Tommy Tan told the court Thursday that Aguilar was suffering from "masked depression" which "substantially impaired her mental responsibility" at the time of the killing.

Tan also said there was a low risk of her reoffending.

In 1995 Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion was hanged for the murder of another maid and a Singaporean boy, straining ties which have since improved.

About 150,000 women, many of them from impoverished villages in the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, work as maids in Singapore.

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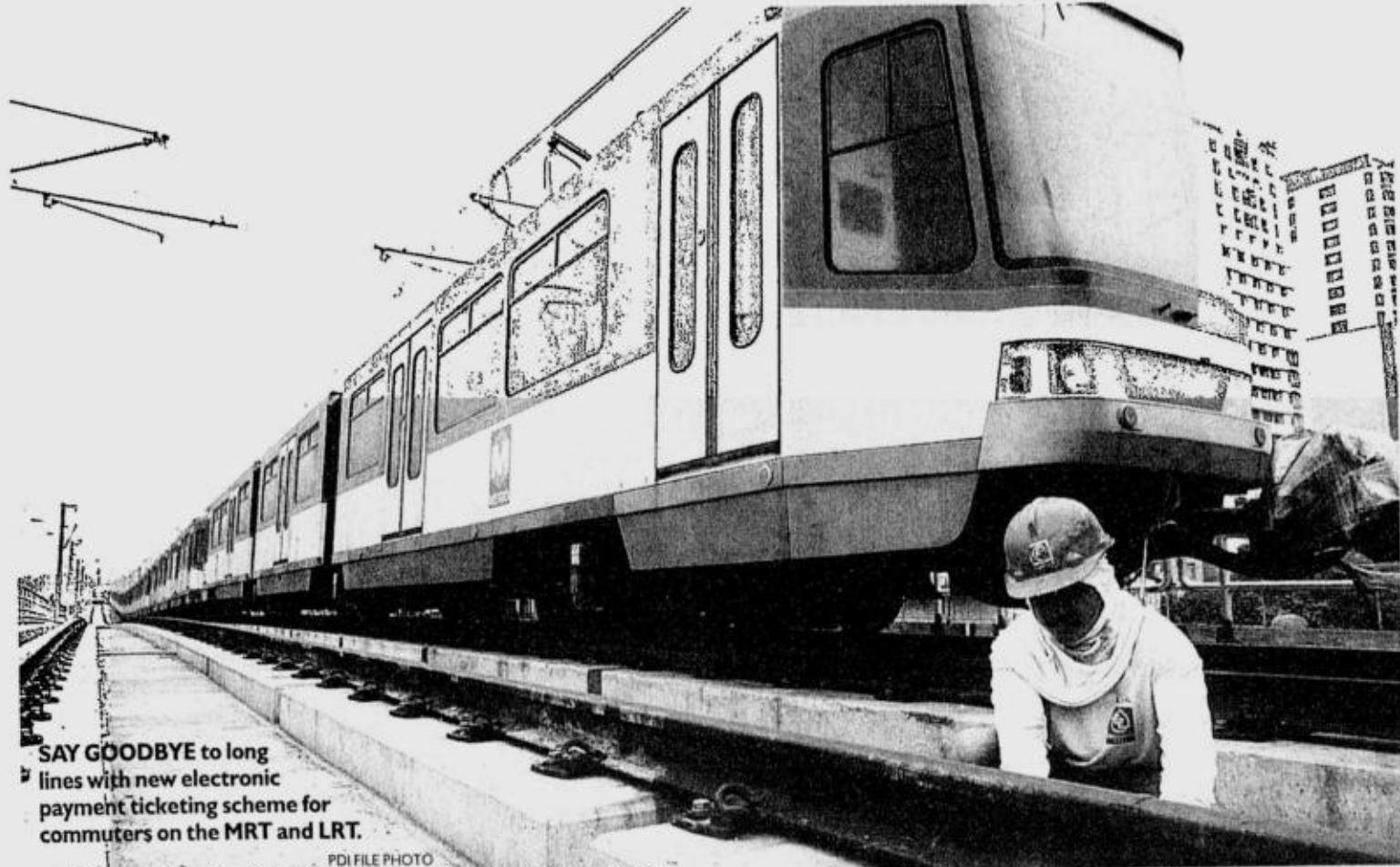
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A plus METRO

Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

Text us your feedback: Inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph



SAY GOODBYE to long lines with new electronic payment ticketing scheme for commuters on the MRT and LRT.

PDI FILE PHOTO

DOTC eyes E-payment for commuter trains

Tickets may be bought through mobile phone

By Daxim I. Lucas

LONG, INCONVENIENT LINES at the terminals of Metro Manila's commuter rail services may soon be a thing of the past after the transportation department unveiled a plan to adopt electronic payment ticketing schemes.

If adopted, commuters may soon be able to buy tickets on the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and the Light Rail Transit (LRT) using their mobile phones, Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Assistant Secretary Roberto R. Castañares said.

The new scheme is on top of an ongoing DOTC project to implement a unified ticketing scheme

for Metro Manila's three different commuter train lines.

"We are working out a system that will allow passengers to purchase tickets through their cell phones," Castañares said. "This system will automatically debit their Smart Cash or G-Cash or their savings accounts so they don't have to wait in long lines when buying tickets."

A similar system is already being used by rail authorities in Hong Kong where passengers use cards that can be read by radio signals by simply putting them near the card readers.

The smart cards can be "reloaded" through bank accounts, through the Internet, or

with mobile phone payment schemes.

Castañares said the DOTC is "seriously considering" the proposal, adding that it is even better and more efficient than the existing program to unify the ticketing systems being undertaken by the French consultancy firm Systra.

"The Systra study is still ongoing and there's no conflict with the present system," he said.

Calls for a more efficient ticketing system have grown louder as the numbers of commuters using the MRT and LRT systems increase, prompted in part by rising gas prices.

This trend is especially evident on the MRT's Line-3—known as the Metrostar Express—which traverses the length of Edsa, Metro Manila's main artery.

During the first quarter of 2006, a total of 34.2 million commuters took the MRT-3, da-

ta from the company showed. This represents an 11.2-percent increase in the number of riders from the 30.2 million who used the service during the same period last year.

According to the Light Rail Transit Authority, on the other hand, 40.1 million commuters rode its two train lines during the first three months of 2006. This represents an 18.2-percent increase over the 33.8 million passengers that it ferried during the same period last year.

During the morning and evening rush hours, it can take up to 15 minutes for commuters to buy tickets owing to the long lines.

The transportation department has already sealed a deal with the city government of Vienna, Austria, which will donate 48 second-hand trains to the Philippines for the MRT's expansion program.

Baclaran centennial: From fishing village to trading hub

By Dulce F. Baybay
Contributor

FOR 12 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN days a week, Norma Sandoval, 57, is at her small sidewalk stall on Redemptorist Road, Baclaran, Parañaque City. She sells religious images from Pampanga, Paete (Laguna) and Bulacan.

Occupying this spot for the past 28 years, Sandoval, a widow, has been able to send her two children to school with her earnings. Her girl is now married while her son finished commerce, major in computer management.

As president of the Federation of Baclaran Vendors consisting of more than a thousand members, Sandoval says on Wednesdays, the number of vendors in Baclaran reach as high as 2,000, many of them ambulant. They come from Quezon Province, Batangas, Cavite, Pateros, Marikina, Taytay and Divisoria, and even as far away as Iloilo.

One fourth of this number are Muslims who come from as far as Zamboanga, though many are already staying on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City. The Muslims have set up their own cooperative, its members also including Christians, to undertake projects to help Barangay Baclaran.

Goods sold include slippers, dresses (local and imported from Korea, Thailand, China), shoes, food and fish.

Regular vendors pay no rent for their space except for what is known as *arkabala* or ticket costing P5 a day that goes to the barangay treasury to be spent for



STA. RITA de Cascia's feast day is marked on the third Sunday of May.

projects like keeping the area clean.

"We are not waiting for dole-outs from the government," says Sandoval. "We are entrepreneurs in our own simple way. I became a vendor in 1978 (when I arrived from) Bacolod to look for a job

here. I used to have a store on the second floor of a building but I was not earning. No one would go up to buy from us. *Ito lang ang paraan para kami mabuhay.*"

She adds that many of their members have prospered and several have children abroad.

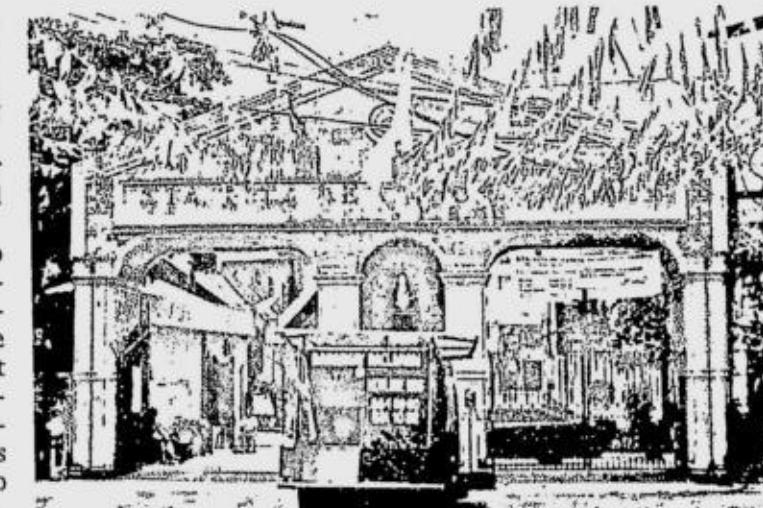
Barangay Councilor Florentino "Ato" Celerridad, 62, says they prioritize giving of space to residents of Baclaran. A long-time public servant, spending the past 27 years in the barangay as *ka-gawad* and even barangay officer-in-charge at one time, he says many of the vendors donate to both the Baclaran parish of Sta. Rita de Cascia and the Redemptorist Church.

The so-called underground economy of Baclaran, says Celerridad, has helped advance the development of Baclaran.

This year, Baclareños are celebrating the centennial of the parish of Baclaran named after its patroness, Sta. Rita de Cascia, the saint of impossible cases. Her fiesta is celebrated third Sunday of May.

Founded in 1906, Sta. Rita de Cascia was the first parish to separate from the centuries old St. Andrew Parish in La Huerta, Parañaque. It is on Quirino Avenue, in an area that used to be a cockpit but now transformed into a sacred site.

For its 100th anniversary, the parish has chosen the theme "We remember, we celebrate, we believe." In cooperation with Barangay Baclaran's officials, led by chair Rolando Cailles, it has embarked on several projects, in-



ENTRANCE arch leading to Sta. Rita de Cascia parish church. RODEL ROTON

cluding a contest for the most attractive arch made of bamboo. After all, the name Baclaran came from *baklad*.

According to folk tales, the area on the shores of Manila Bay used to be a thriving fishing vil-

lage. Fishermen from the neighboring towns of Bacoor, Imus, Tanza, Binakayan in the province of Cavite; and those from Malibay, Pilder, Mabong and Maricaban migrated to Baclaran, transforming the area into a



SHOPPING on the side for devotees in the many stalls surrounding the churches of Baclaran. RODEL ROTON



NCRPO CHIEF Vidal Querol (right) with MPD Chief Pedro Bulaong at Divisoria market to monitor security measures in the area. REM ZAMORA

A safer Divisoria welcomes shoppers

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE MANILA POLICE DISTRICT (MPD) and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce yesterday launched its "Safe Ka sa Divisoria" program in an effort to provide assistance and security to thousands of students shopping for school supplies.

"Shoppers are again expected to flock to Divisoria before the opening of classes, and we have to be ready to protect them from petty criminals," Bulaong said.

The police chief added, "The Filipino-Chinese community and the Divisoria Vendors Association are very receptive to the enhanced safety measures."

More men

As part of the improved safety measures, the MPD would deploy additional policemen and "sekretas" (plainclothes policemen) to prevent the possible resurgence of pickpockets and snatchers in the area's markets and malls, Bulaong said.

Assistance center

The MPD official added that the district would also set up a police assistance and information center in the heart of Divisoria to handle complaints from victims of petty crimes.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ 4 nabbed in marijuana buy-bust raid /A27



■ Suspected carjack gang members charged in QC /A26

■ 2 jail guards linked to journalist's slay /A26

bustling fish trade hub.

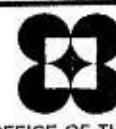
In the early 1900s, the place was filled with bamboo groves or *kawayanan*, providing the *kawayan* for making *baklad* or fish traps. Fishermen harvested fish daily and sold them in the nearest market.

People started calling the place *bakladan*, or the fishermen's village. Eventually, the "d" would be replaced by the "r", hence, Baclaran.

Due to its strategic location, Baclaran became a transit point for those coming from Southern and Northern Luzon, a melting pot for commerce, especially bargain hunters. It also attracted religious devotees especially after World War II when the novena to the Perpetual Help at the Redemptorist Church became popular (even overshadowing the parish church of Sta. Rita de Cascia). The devotion to the Perpetual Help is said to be the biggest Marian devotion in Asia, attracting people from all over the archipelago. Regardless of time of day or night, a visitor to Baclaran will see vendors plying their trade; commuters getting off and on buses, jeepneys, tricycles, taxis; a bustling place that never seems to sleep.

Peace and order is priority. Volunteer members of Patrol 117 and Task Force 207 are always visible, making sure petty crimes like cell phone snatching and mugging do not occur.

From a fishermen's village to a bustling district, Barangay Baclaran has become a principal business area of the city of Parañaque.



Republic of the Philippines DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
DOST Administrative Order No. 002
Series of 2006

SUBJECT: Guidelines in the Recovery of Costs of Products and Services of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) Particularly in the Flight Folder Issuance and the Fee Structure Thereof

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines is a signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, ICAO Document No. 7300, otherwise known as the Chicago Convention, to further enhance agreement on certain principles and arrangements in order that international civil aviation may be developed in a safe and orderly manner and that international air transport services may be established on the basis of equality of opportunity and operated soundly and economically;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a Member country of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and a Contracting State of the Convention on International Civil Aviation which designated the PAGASA as the Designated Meteorological Authority (DMA) of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines primarily taking charge to arrange for the provision of meteorological service for international air navigation on its behalf;

WHEREAS, various principles and methodologies are laid out in the ICAO and WMO guidance materials on cost recovery, namely: Manual on Air Navigation Service Economics (ICAO Doc. 9161), ICAO's Policies on Charges for Airports and Air Navigation Services (ICAO Doc. 9082) and WMO Guide on Aeronautical Meteorological Services Cost Recovery (WMO No. 904);

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 159, it is the goal of the government: (1) to promote full recovery of cost of services to free other government revenues for priority projects; and (2) to ensure equitable distribution of the burden of cost recovery by having the direct recipients of government services account for the costs;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 54, Chapter 12, Book IV of Executive Order No. 292 (Administrative Code of 1987), heads of bureaus, offices or agencies, may, upon approval of the department head, charge and collect the cost of the services rendered by the bureau, office or agency concerned;

WHEREFORE, pursuant to the provisions of the aforesaid, the following rules and regulations for the implementation of collection of fees and charges for PAGASA products and services are hereby promulgated.

PART I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Title. These guidelines shall be known and cited as the PAGASA Flight Folder Issuance Fee Structure.

Section 2. Definition of terms and acronyms. - Unless defined otherwise, the following terms and acronyms shall refer to the definitions provided hereunder:

- a. "PAGASA" refers to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, a service institute of the Department of Science and Technology mandated to undertake, *inter alia*, observation, collection, assessment and processing of atmospheric and allied data for the benefit of agriculture, commerce and industry.
- b. "AMSO" refers to the Aeronautical Meteorological Service Office (or AeroMeteorological Service Office). An organic unit of the Weather Forecasting Section-Weather Branch mandated by law to issue Flight Documentation Folders to aeronautical users.
- c. "WMO" refers to the World Meteorological Organization. A specialized agency of the United Nations purposefully established to further the application of meteorology to aviation, shipping, water resources management, agriculture and other human activities, among others.
- d. "ICAO" refers to the International Civil Aviation Organization. A specialized agency of the United Nations established to standardize and establish International Standards, Recommended Practices and Procedures covering the technical field of aviation: licensing of personnel, rules of the air, aeronautical meteorology, and aeronautical charts, among others.
- e. "DMA" refers to the Designated Meteorological Authority. The authority providing or arranging for the provision of meteorological service for international air navigation on behalf of a Member country. DMA is functionally referred to as "Service Provider".
- f. "FOLDER" refers to the Flight Documentation Folder. It consists of written or printed documents, including charts or forms containing meteorological information for a flight.
- g. "USER" refers to an entity or individual that utilizes a service furnished by the "Service Provider".
- h. "FEES" refers to all charges and costs assessed against the direct recipients of specialized products and services provided by PAGASA in the exercise of its functions.
- i. "AerIS" refers to AeroMeteorological Information System which is a sub-system of the WAFS-Meteorological Laboratory.
- j. "PAGASA AerIS" refers to PAGASA's aeronautical meteorological information system developed through WAFS-MetLab.
- k. "SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR" refers to one who, as a primary job function, manages computer and network systems on behalf of another, such as an employer or client.
- l. "FL" refers to flight level.
- m. "hPa" refers to hecto-Pascal. A unit of measurement of atmospheric pressure.
- n. "ETOPS" refers to Extended Range Operation with two engine airplanes.
- o. "AERODROME" refers to a defined area on land, ice, or water (including any buildings, installations or equipment) intended to be used either wholly or partially for the arrival, departure, movement, or servicing of aircraft.
- p. "ALTERNATE AERODROME" An aerodrome specified in the flight plan to which a flight may proceed when it becomes inadvisable to land at the aerodrome of intended landing.
- q. "EN-ROUTE ALTERNATE AERODROME" refers to an aerodrome at which an aircraft would be able to land after experiencing an abnormal or emergency condition while en route.
- r. "AERODROME OF DESTINATION" refers to an aerodrome at which an aircraft is designated to land.
- s. "SRPs" refers to standards and recommended practices employed by both the ICAO and WMO.
- t. "PROGNOSTIC UPPER-AIR CHARTS" refers to prognosticated ICAO standard isobaric upper-level charts composed mainly of forecast air-temperature, wind direction and speed usually with validity period of six (6) to thirty six (36) hours.
- u. "SIGNIFICANT WEATHER CHARTS" refers to prognosticated weather charts for a designated level usually at FL250-630. It may contain forecasts of cloud areas with indication of its tops; jet streams at different levels, volcanic activity/ash extent and location, frontal systems and its direction and speed and other meteorological information which may affect the safety of aircraft operations.
- v. "WAFS" refers to the World Area Forecast System developed by ICAO and WMO to improve the quality and consistency of en-route guidance provided for international aircraft operations.
- w. "TAFOR" refers to the complete description of the meteorological elements expected at and over the aerodrome throughout the whole of the forecast period. It could be in a 9 or 24-hour validity period, including any changes considered to be significant to aircraft operations. It is prepared by trained staff (aeronautical meteorological forecaster), who, using the latest available regulations, ensure that internationally agreed practices are followed. This is one of the basic aeronautical meteorological information needed in flight planning for safety of the conduct of international or national air navigation.
- x. "METAR" refers to the name code for an aviation routine weather report. In the Philippines, it is issued at hourly intervals. This type of report is one of the basic considerations in the formulation of a TAFOR.
- y. "SPECI" refers to the name of the code for an aviation special weather report. A SPECI can be issued at any time when certain criteria are met. (See Appendix A). This type of report is also one of the basic considerations in the formulation of a TAFOR.
- z. "Service Provider" refers to PAGASA, as an entity that provides meteorological information to various users or customers.
- aa. "Meteorological Information" refers to meteorological report, analysis, forecast, and any other statement relating to existing or expected meteorological conditions.

Section 3. Electronic Flight Folder Acquisition. Automated Flight Folder issuances shall be in place and shall be maintained by the PAGASA AerIS Systems Administrator utilizing its FTP service. Authorized Users shall be given a username and password to gain access to the necessary Folder.

Section 4. Folder Preparation and Formulation. The Folder shall be prepared and formulated in advance by the AMSO throughout the 24-hour period.

Section 5. Folder Availability. The designated Forecaster shall post the latest Folder at the designated PAGASA website two (2) to three (3) hours prior to the intended time of departure.

Section 6. Flight Schedule: contents. The User shall be responsible for the submission of the frequency of Folder issuance (daily, weekly or monthly) within a period of seven (7) working days prior to the effectiveness of the schedule. The flight schedule shall contain the (a) time of departure; (b) aerodrome of departure; (c) alternate aerodrome (including take-off alternate, en-route alternate, ETOPS en-route alternate); and (d) aerodrome of destination.

Section 7. Unscheduled, Re-scheduled and Cancelled Flights. Requests for flight Folder outside the submitted schedule or for re-scheduled flights must be made at least twelve (12) hours before the intended time of departure.

Section 8. Folder Structure. The general structure of a flight documentation folder must be made in accordance with the standard format prescribed in the WMO and ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. It is categorized into International Flight Folder; and Domestic Flight Folder.

International Flight Folder shall be composed of the following items

- a. Multi-level prognostic upper-air charts, i.e. FL300 and FL390, with validity period of twenty four (24) hours or more;
- b. Significant Weather Chart, i.e. FL250 - 630, with a validity period of twelve (12) hours;
- c. Compiled list of Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAFOR) of each of aerodrome of departure, destination, alternate, en-route alternate, take-off alternate, ETOPS en-route alternate and destination alternate.

Domestic Flight Folder shall be composed of the following items:

- a. Multi-level prognostic upper-air charts or a choice of two of the following:
 - i. Surface (10 meter level);
 - ii. 1000 hPa level; 850 hPa level; and
 - iii. 700 hPa level
- b. Significant Weather Charts valid up to twelve (12) hours of the following levels:
 - i. Medium level 700 hPa to 400 hPa or FL100 to FL250;
 - ii. Low-level - Surface to 700 hPa or SFC-FL100;
 - iii. Compiled list of Terminal Aerodrome Forecast (TAFOR) of each of aerodrome of departure, destination, alternate, en-route alternate, take-off alternate.

PART II FEES

Section 1. Schedule of Fees. The fees prescribed in this Section are applicable to the products and/or services and materials furnished by the AMSO.

Schedule of Fees		
Reference Code	Product/Service Type	Cost
IFF	Flight Documentation Folder for International Flights	US\$ 15.00
DFF	Domestic Folder for Domestic Flights (Commercial)	P100.00

Section 2. Billing. The Accounting Section shall bill the User on a monthly basis. The statement of Account shall be issued by the PAGASA AerIS system administrator containing, among others, the description of products and services, corresponding cost computed based on the prevailing exchange rate at the time of rendering of service.

Section 3. Delinquent payment: surcharge. Payments made after fifteen (15) days from bill date shall be assessed a surcharge of one percent (1%) of the total amount due.

Section 4. Folder access suspension. Users are entitled to thirty (30) days grace period within which to settle their accounts. Beyond which their access to the flight folder shall be suspended. The suspension will be lifted three (3) days after the User has satisfactorily settled in full his accountabilities which includes his unpaid account plus the corresponding surcharge.

Section 5. Fees Collected. The fees collected by PAGASA from the Users pursuant to this Department Order shall be deposited to the National Treasury.

PART III MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Periodic Review of Fees. The PAGASA Flight Folder fee structure shall be reviewed whenever necessary provided that the rates of fees herein provided may be increased only once a year, unless otherwise required by law, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuance.

Section 2. Revision of Fees. Notice of revision of fees shall be given to users or their duly authorized representatives at least four (4) months prior to the intended revision. During the said period, users may submit their views and/or comment to the service provider.

Section 3. User Consultation. Consultation with the Users shall be done as frequent as necessary to gauge the cost effectiveness of the service and/or product.

Section 4. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Department Order is declared unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, the other parts not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 5. Effectivity. This Department Order shall take effect immediately after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

(Sgd.) ESTRELLA F. ALABASTRO
Secretary

A26

FRIDAY,
MAY 19, 2006

Charges filed vs car theft suspects in QC

By DJ Yap

CHARGES HAVE BEEN FILED AGAINST four suspected members of a car theft syndicate caught recently in a buy-bust operation.

The Regional Special Operation of the National Capital Region Police Office charged Joveno Lomoco, 31; Lamberto Hernandez, 43; Wella Ante, 28; and Ronald Aglubug with violation of the anti-car theft law before the Quezon City prosecutor's office.

The complaint said the respondents, with two other men, were caught negotiating with a man posing as a buyer for the sale of stolen vehicles on May 9 at a gasoline station on Commonwealth Avenue.

The operation, conducted jointly by the National Bureau of Investigation Bulacan District Office and the 306 Provincial Mobile Group took place after businessman Rico Mangulabnan reported the theft of his Ford Everest on April 26 in Makati City.

Authorities received reports that Ante and Aglubug were seen aboard a Ford Everest. A police asset contacted the two and acted as a broker for the sale of a Ford Everest to SPO4 Rodolfo Rival, posing as a buyer. The transaction was set for May 9.

At the meeting, Ante and Aglubug, with Lomoco and Hernandez, arrived in a Toyota Revo with plate number XAF-805. They said no Ford Everest was available and offered other models instead. Rival agreed provided he was allowed to inspect the cars.

Two more men, Edgar Cantonjos and Danilo Panergo, arrived in a Mitsubishi Adventure with plate number SHB-792. The policemen then arrested all the suspects.

Businesswoman Teresa Parayno later claimed the Toyota Revo, which she said was stolen a few days earlier.

Though Cantonjos and Panergo were included in the charge sheet, the prosecutor said further investigation was required since there were no complainants against them.

METROBRIEFS

2 guards linked to journalist's slay

TWO JAIL GUARDS and a fire marshal have been linked to the killing of tabloid reporter Albert Orsolino who died in an ambush near the boundary of Caloocan and Malabon on Tuesday morning, a police official said. "The investigation pointed to the them as possible suspects," said Caloocan City Police Chief of Police Senior Supt. Gerónimo Reside.

"The guards were alleged to be relatives of a complainant against Orsolino who was killed a year ago. The fire marshal, on the other hand, reportedly had an axe to grind against the reporter," Reside said. The police official also clarified earlier reports that the two guards had been detained. "Unless positively tagged by witnesses, we cannot detain them," Reside said. The fireman, who denied the charges, said the motorcycle used in the ambush which is now under police custody was sold to one "Tony Bombay" last year.

Nancy C. Carval



Open house at German School

AFTER 25 YEARS of exclusively serving Metro Manila's German-speaking community, Deutsche Schule Manila is opening its doors to non-German speakers by offering an English Stream for the coming school year. To learn more what this is all about, parents are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at 75 Swaziland Street, Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque City. Call Tel: 7761000, e-mail: dsm@eis-manila.org, or visit the website at www.eis-manila.org.

'Not our signatures'

SIX public high school teachers are asking the Office of the Ombudsman to withdraw a case filed against Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga, saying that they had not signed the complaint sheet. The names of Rosemarie Romero and Lorraine Doong of the Taguig National High School; Dolorita dela Corte, Nestor Ramos, Yolanda Iglesias and Joseph Soguilon of the Upper Bicutan National High School were contained in the complaint that accused Tinga of abuse of authority, oppression, unfair practice and discrimination. The charges stemmed from the alleged cutting off of the teachers' allowance from the Local School Board (LSB), headed by Tinga. The teachers, according to the complaint, alleged that the LSB stopped giving them their allowances without prior notice and legal basis. Late last month, the six teachers were surprised when they received a copy of an order for administrative investigation of the case from the Ombudsman since they said they had not filed any case against the mayor. "It now appears that by some technical maneuver, our signatures were transferred to the said Complaint-Affidavit," said the teachers in their joint affidavit. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

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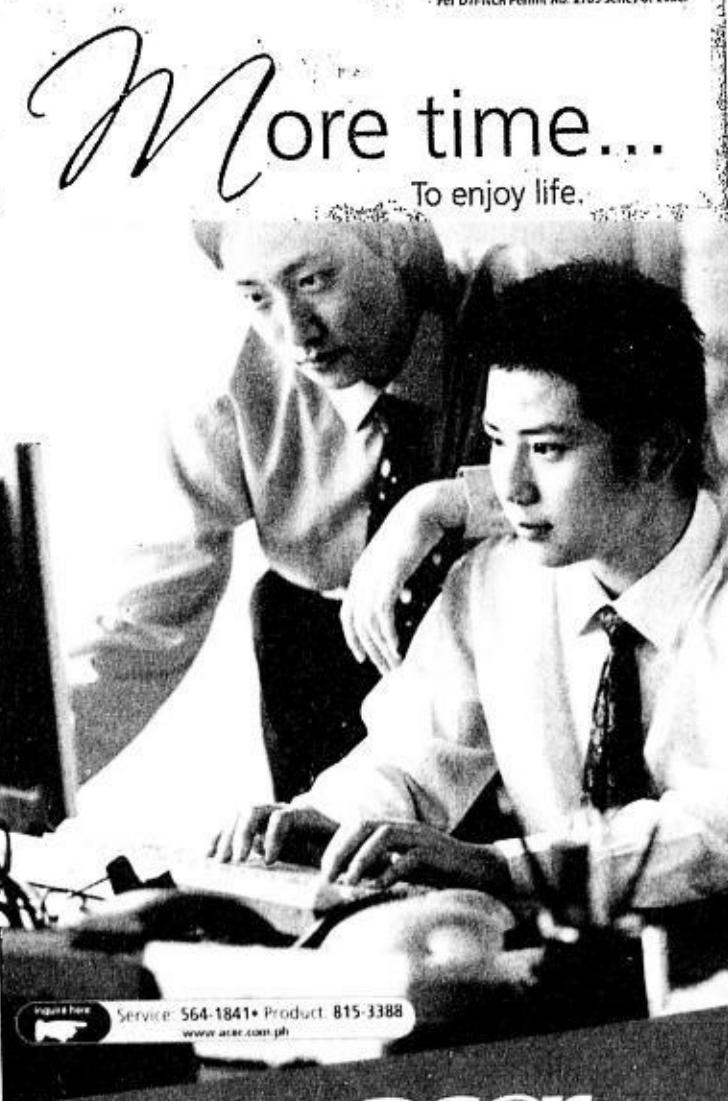
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US eyes negotiating new treaty with N. Korea

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States is considering a new approach to North Korea that would include beginning negotiations on a peace treaty at the same time as six-country talks on dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear programs, the New York Times reported late on Wednesday.

President George W. Bush is very likely to approve the new approach, which had been hotly debated by different factions within his administration, the Times said on its website.

But the change would only happen if North Korea returned

to the talks, which have been stalled for months by its refusal to participate.

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, chief US negotiator with North Korea, was in Singapore on Wednesday, US officials told Reuters. South Korean media reported that he would soon visit their country but that could not be immediately confirmed.

The new thinking about North Korea would coincide with efforts by the United States and other major powers, so far fruitless, to persuade Iran to drop its planned nuclear program.

Many officials and experts are

concerned that Iran draws inspiration from North Korea, which has suffered few international penalties since declaring that it possesses nuclear weapons and will continue to make nuclear fuel.

Although the United States in recent months launched a crackdown on Pyongyang's income from illicit activities like counterfeiting, China and South Korea have continued and in some instances increased aid and investment to the impoverished North, US officials say.

North Korea has long demanded a peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-

1953 Korean war and the administration has said previously it would be willing to consider working on such an agreement.

But the question of when such benefits might flow to Pyongyang has sharply divided the administration.

Many officials have been hoping the communist regime in Pyongyang would collapse but experts say that is unlikely to happen any time soon.

The administration initially insisted the North dismantle its nuclear programs before receiving any economic or political returns but has softened that position over

time. The latest move to offer simultaneous peace treaty talks and nuclear negotiations looks to be a further modification.

However, it is unclear whether this new offer will alter Pyongyang's stance. It has refused to return to six-country negotiations on the nuclear issue since an inconclusive session last November.

In recent interviews with Reuters, two senior US officials were very pessimistic about persuading the North to return to the table and said they did not expect any movement until after Bush leaves office at the earliest.

State department spokesperson Sean McCormack declined to comment on the New York Times report.

But he told Reuters the North still had not made the fundamental decision to abandon its nuclear program and had not agreed on a date to restart the nuclear negotiations.

McCormack noted that a joint statement approved Sept. 19 by the six parties—including the United States, North and South Korea, China, Russia and Japan—foreshadowed talks on a broad range of issues, including a new peace treaty, within the context of the six-party process.

Reuters

5 in Indonesia family infected with bird flu

JAKARTA—AT LEAST FIVE MEMBERS OF AN Indonesian family have been infected with bird flu, the World Health Organization confirmed on Wednesday, after the case triggered widespread fears of human-to-human transmission.

There is no immediate evidence the H5N1 flu virus passed easily among at least seven members of the family in North Sumatra province. But experts said nothing could be ruled out and more testing was crucial.

In a day of fast-moving events, the WHO also said a caterer from Surabaya city in East Java had died of bird flu, while Indonesia's health ministry said local tests had confirmed a 12-year-old boy from Jakarta who died four days ago was infected with H5N1. Both cases are separate from the Sumatra case.

Clusters of human infections are worrying because they indicate that the virus might be mutating into a form that is easily transmissible among humans. That, experts say, could spark a pandemic in which millions might die.

For the moment, the virus is mainly a disease in birds and is hard for humans to catch.

In Djibouti, which has confirmed the first human case in sub-Saharan Africa after a 2-year-old girl tested positive for H5N1, slaughtering of poultry was halted after angry villagers refused to cooperate unless they received immediate compensation.

Officials hoped to re-start culling domestic chickens to contain the virus as soon as possible. The impoverished nation in the Horn of Africa has appealed for international help to fight the disease.

Reuters

China bans risky breast enlarger gel

BELING—A GEL USED FOR BREAST ENLARGEMENTS IN CHINA has been banned after hundreds of women injected with the fluid reported suffering severe pain and other health problems, state media said Thursday.

The State Food and Drug Administration last month banned the use of hydrophilic polyacrylamide gel, known in China as Ao Mei Ding, the China Daily newspaper reported.

"It continuously caused negative effects ... and the administration's monitoring center believes its safety cannot be guaranteed," the paper quoted the government body as saying.

More than 300,000 Chinese women have been injected with the so-called "magic liquid" in the past five years, estimated Qiao Qun, director of plastic surgery at Peking Union Hospital.

Qun said more than 100 women come to her hospital every year to request to have the liquid removed after suffering from aches and pains.

"Many are in such agony that they can hardly sleep and some have had the harrowing experience of having their breasts removed to save their lives," the report said.

However, the gel, made by Chinese firm Fu Hua Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. in the northeastern province of Jilin, cannot be completely removed and will forever threaten the health of the women concerned, it said.

AFP



CAMBODIA TOURIST-DRAWER

Tourists climb up the Angkor Wat temple in Siem Reap province, some 314 km northwest of Phnom Penh, May 10. Almost one and a half million foreign tourists flocked to Cambodia last year, with most of them passing through the country's famed Angkor Wat temple complex.

AFP

Using hi-tech gadgets, students find new ways to cheat

LOS ANGELES—AT THE UNIVERSITY of California at Los Angeles, a student loaded his class notes into a handheld e-mail device and tried to read them during an exam; a classmate turned him in. At the journalism school at San Jose State University, students tried to use spell check on their laptops when part of the exam was designed to test their ability to spell.

And at the University of Nevada, Las

Vegas, after students photographed test questions with their cell phone cameras, transmitted them to classmates outside the exam room and got the answers back in text messages, the university put in place a new proctoring system.

"If they'd spend as much time studying," said an exasperated Ron Yasbin, dean of the College of Sciences at UNLV, "they'd all be A students."

With their arsenal of electronic gad-

gets, students these days find it easier to cheat. And so, faced with an array of inventive techniques in recent years, college officials find themselves in a new game of cat and mouse, trying to outwit would-be cheaters this exam season with a range of strategies—cutting off Internet access from laptops, demanding the surrender of cell phones before tests or simply requiring that exams be taken the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper.

"It is kind of a hassle," said Ryan M. Dapremont, 21, who just finished his third year at Seaver College at Pepperdine University, and has had to take his exams on paper.

"My handwriting is so bad," he said.

"Whenever I find myself having to write in a bluebook, I find my hand cramps up more, and I can't write as quickly."

Some students said they thought cheating these days was more a product of the mind-set, not the tools at hand.

NYT

Stunning gene comparison suggests ancestors of humans, chimpanzees may have interbred

By Nicholas Wade

THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE HUMAN and chimpanzee lineages, a pivotal event in human evolution, may have occurred millions of years later than fossil bones suggest, and the break may not have been as clean as humans might like.

A new comparison of the human and chimp genomes suggests that after the two lineages separated, they may have begun interbreeding.

The analysis, by David Reich, Nick Patterson and colleagues at the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Mass., sets up a serious conflict between the date of the split as indicated by fossil skulls, about

7 million years ago, and the more recent date implied by genetic analysis, as late as 5.4 million years ago.

The conflict can be resolved, Reich's team suggests in an article published in Thursday's issue of *Nature*, if there were in fact two splits between the human and chimp lineages, with the first being followed by interbreeding between the two populations and then a second split.

The suggestion of a hybridization has startled paleoanthropologists, who nonetheless are treating the new genetic data seriously.

Hybrid populations often go extinct because the males are sterile, Reich pointed out, so hybrid females may

have mated with male chimps to produce viable offspring. The human lineage finally re-emerged from this hybrid population, Reich suggests, explaining the younger genetic dates, while the very early fossils with human-like features may come from the earlier period before the hybridization.

The Reich team's study is a detailed analysis of the human and chimp genomes, and also draws on DNA sequences from the gorilla, orangutan and macaque to iron out ambiguities. They calculate that the human and chimp lines must have split completely apart at the earliest 6.3 million years ago and more probably 5.4 million years ago.

But besides averaging genome-wide differences in DNA to get on overall fix on when the two species split apart, they have also been able to scroll along the genome and estimate the relative age of each small section.

One finding is that the X chromosomes of humans and chimps appear to have diverged about 1.2 million years more recently than the other chromosomes. Females have two X chromosomes, males one X and one Y chromosome.

One explanation for this, Reich's team says, is that there was a hybridization between the recently separated chimp and human lineages.



AN ORANGUTAN plays with a football at an amusement park in Seoul, May 18.

The WORLD

Editor Laverne B. Gueco

HEAT rises from the road along the international border separating San Luis, Ariz., from San Luis, Sonora, Mexico, May 17 as Border Patrol agents keep a tight watch in the US' busiest immigrant-smuggling hotspot.

AP

A shot at citizenship for US illegals

Senate backs fence along border, citizenship for illegals with 2-year stay

WASHINGTON—THE SENATE AGREED TO GIVE millions of illegal immigrants a shot at US citizenship and backed construction of 370 miles of triple-layered fencing along the Mexican border, but prospects that legislation will clear Congress were clouded by a withering attack against President George W. Bush by a prominent Republican.

"Regardless of what the president says, what he is proposing is amnesty," said Rep. James Sensenbrenner, the lawmaker who would lead House of Repre-

sentatives negotiators in any attempt to draft a compromise immigration bill this year.

Bush insisted that he has no interest in amnesty for illegal immigrants and a new guest worker program for as many as 200,000 people a year. Senate passage probably will come next week.

Sen. David Vitter led the drive

to strip from the bill a provision to give an eventual chance at citizenship to illegal immigrants who have been in the country more than two years. His attempt failed, 66-33, to a bipartisan coalition, and the provision survived. In all, 41 Democrats joined with 24 Republicans and one independent to turn back the proposal.

The vote to build what supporters called a "real fence"—as distinct from the virtual fence already incorporated in the legislation—was 83-16. The fence

would be built in areas "most often used by smugglers and illegal aliens," as determined by federal officials. Republican Sen. Jeff Sessions estimated the cost at roughly \$3.2 million per mile, more than \$900 million for 300 miles.

It marked the first significant victory for conservatives eager to leave their stamp on a measure that looks increasingly as if it is headed toward Senate passage.

"What we have here has be-

come a symbol for the right wing

in American politics," said Sen. Dick Durbin, the Senate's second-ranking Democrat. He said passage would mean "our relationship with Mexico would come down to a barrier between our two countries."

The House legislation passed over strenuous Democratic opposition. It would make all illegal aliens subject to prosecution as felons and impose construction of a 700-mile fence along the Mexican border—more than twice as long as the barrier the Senate backed.

AP

53 dead after Taliban raid on Afghan town

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN—TALIBAN INSURGENTS LAUNCHED A MAJOR ATTACK ON A TOWN IN THE SOUTHERN AFGHAN PROVINCE OF HELMAND AND 13 POLICEMEN AND 40 TALIBAN WERE KILLED IN NINE HOURS OF FIGHTING, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID ON THURSDAY.

In a separate incident, a suicide car bomber attacked a convoy in the western city of Herat, killing himself and an American, police said. The American was a civilian state department contractor, the US Embassy said.

The Taliban attacked the southern town, Mosa Qala, on Wednesday evening and the fighting went on until early on Thursday, government officials said.

"Thirteen policemen were killed and six were injured," the interior ministry said.

"Forty people on the enemy side were killed," a ministry official said, citing a statement from spokesperson Yousuf Stanizai.

The Taliban have stepped up attacks on foreign and Afghan government forces in recent months. The violence in parts of the country is the worst it has been since the hardline Islamists were driven from power in late 2001.

Helmand's deputy governor, Amir Mohammad Akhundzada, said it was the biggest attack in the province since the end of Taliban rule. Hundreds of Taliban were involved, he said.

Fighting was continuing as security forces battled the insurgents as they withdrew, Akhundzada said, adding there had been some civilian casualties but he did not know how many.

British troops are in charge of security in the



KILLED—Canadian Capt. Nichola Kathleen Sarah Goddard in undated photo.

REUTERS

said it was a civilian convoy and the dead American was a civilian training Afghan police.

The Taliban focused their attack on Mosa Qala on government offices and police stations and many shops in the town's market caught fire during the battle, Akhundzada said.

The town, 470 km southwest of the capital, Kabul, is about 40 km north of the province's Sangin district, the scene of frequent clashes between Taliban and foreign and government forces.

A Taliban commander, speaking by telephone, said 30 policemen had been killed. Taliban spokesperson Qari Mohammad Yousaf told the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency Taliban had captured the town but later withdrew.

The recent surge in violence comes as Nato members are sending reinforcements to boost their peacekeeping force from 9,000 to 16,000.

With about 23,000 troops, the United States now has its largest force in Afghanistan since its military involvement began in October 2001.

A Canadian woman soldier was killed in neighboring Kandahar province on Wednesday, hours before Canada's parliament narrowly backed a two-year extension of Canada's Afghan mission to February 2009.

The US military said 18 Taliban were killed and 26 captured in the fighting in Panjwai district, 25 km west of Kandahar town.

The Taliban were ousted by US-led forces in late 2001 after refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.



RELATIVES OF A VICTIM OF THE RUSSIAN HOSTAGE SIEGE CRYING AT THE CEMETERY IN BESLAN, NORTH OSSETIA, SEPT. 6, 2004.

AP

Beslan victims demand harsh sentence on attacker

VLADIKAVKAZ, RUSSIA—Relatives of those killed in the Beslan school massacre called for a harsh sentence—even death—as the reading of a guilty verdict against the sole surviving hostage-taker entered its third day Thursday.

Some of those who lost loved ones in the September 2004 tragedy think a decade-old national moratorium on capital punishment should be lifted for Nurpashi Kulayev, 25, the sole survivor among the 32 hostage-takers.

"I want an adequate sentence. He deserves death. His

crime cannot be justified," said Rita Sidakova, whose nine-year-old daughter was killed in the world's bloodiest hostage drama.

"Before they died, our children were held hostage, drank urine, fainted for lack of oxygen in a crowded room and soiled their clothes because they were not allowed to go to the toilet," Sidakova said, tears streaking her face.

"Even if there is a moratorium, I want Kulayev sentenced to death. Maybe one day the moratorium will be lifted and he will die," she added.

AP

No one knows how many illegals in UK—Blair

LONDON—THE AURA OF HAPLESSNESS THAT HANGS OVER PRIME MINISTER Tony Blair's government grew Wednesday when he admitted that it has no idea exactly how many illegal immigrants are in Britain.

"There are no official estimates of the number of illegal immigrants into the United Kingdom," Blair told parliament where the main opposition Conservatives seized on the issue.

"By its very nature illegal immigration is difficult to measure and any estimates would be highly speculative."

Immigration minister Tony McNulty told BBC television later that the best estimate of the number of illegal immigrants, which was "roughly in the ball park," was between 310,000 and 570,000, and it could take 10 years to deport them.

Blair sought to use the issue—which dominated the morning newspapers and radio talk shows—to promote his controversial plan to introduce ID cards for everyone in the country.

"We need identity cards both for foreign nationals and for

British nationals," he said. "If we want to track people coming in and out of our country and know the identity of people here, that is what we have to do."

But with his popularity among voters at its lowest point since he came to power nine years ago, and his Labour government ensnared in several furores, Blair was left on the defensive.

In a testy exchange across the floor of the lower House of Commons, Conservative leader David Cameron said the prime minister sounded "rattled" and that the

government was in "paralysis."

The immigration flap grew out of an admission Tuesday by Dave Roberts, the Home Office official in charge of deportations. He told a parliamentary committee that he did not have "the faintest idea" how many illegal immigrants were in the country.

Political analysts were not too surprised, given that visitors to Britain go through immigration controls only when they arrive, and that there has never been a peacetime ID card system as in continental Europe.

AP

MIAMI—THE USS ORISKANY AIRCRAFT carrier on Wednesday became the first US warship scuttled as an artificial reef after explosive charges sent it to the ocean floor off Florida's Gulf Coast.

A little over 30 minutes after the explosive charges were set off, the 270-m, 32,000-ton US Navy vessel was completely submerged.

"It's been successful," US Navy spokesman Pat Dolen said after the sinking of the ship 37 km off Pensacola, in western Florida.

US Navy divers will inspect the shipwreck on Thursday to determine whether it sits upright at a depth of 66 m, as intended.

"It's kind of sad," said retired US Navy pilot Stuart Reynolds, who had flown missions from the Oriskany during the Vietnam War and watched the imposing ship go to its wa-

ter grave.

"But now she has a new life; she's better off than being cut up for razor blades," he said, speaking by cell phone from the Reel Easy, one of the hundreds of boats that sailed out into the Gulf of Mexico to watch the aircraft carrier's final moments afloat.

"Oh my God, she's gone," he said minutes after the ship was completely submerged.

Munching on a pork chop that Reel Easy's captain, "Buddy," grilled on the fishing boat's barbecue, Reynolds said he planned to dive the wreck with his family.

The Oriskany is the first US Navy warship intentionally sunk to create an artificial reef to attract coral growth, scuba divers, fish and fishermen. It is also the largest ship ever sunk on purpose to create a reef.

AP



US AIRCRAFT carrier Oriskany sinking May 17 to become the world's largest intentionally created artificial reef.

REUTERS

MOBILE LEARNING FOR KIDS

Handog ng Globe sa Buwan ng mga Ina

Globe pays tribute to a yearlong partnership with Gizmo Advisory Board (GAB)

Recognizing the need for parents to address the issue of responsible mobile parenting as well as take part in the holistic development of the Filipino child, Globe Gizmo Prepaid partnered with The Parenting Company to convene some of the country's top family, communications and education experts for the first-ever advisory board on responsible mobile connectivity for the youth. Dubbed the Gizmo Advisory Board (GAB), the group sought to study the Filipino youth's mobile usage habits, pinpointing significant issues and formulating projects that are attuned to the segment's distinct needs.

For the past year, the GAB had actively set up activities in their effort to encourage the use of technology as a non-threatening influence for child learning and nurturing. The GAB endeavored to turn the challenge of modernity into an opportunity for development and pursued activities that aimed to re-evaluate and reconfigure child nurturing methods to keep up with the needs of modern Filipino child.

The members of the board consist of reputable parenting advocates:

Ms. Emily Abrera is the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. An icon in the advertising industry in the country, she is currently Chairman Emeritus of McCann Erickson Philippines, the country's leading advertising agency.



Dr. Leticia Ho is a former Dean of the College of Education in the University of the Philippines. Although her main focus nowadays is her practice of clinical psychology, she continues to teach at the University of the Philippines and gives her time to advisory boards that are in line with her advocacy.

Ms. Tina Juan is popularly known for her daily morning show "In Fitness & In Health" and for her fitness column in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. A certified fitness professional, she is also the fitness columnist for Health Today, Badminton Philippines and Metro Magazine and the author of "Lose Weight! Feel Good! Look Great!"

Mr. Francis Kong is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Funworks, Inc., the group that brought to the country Mad Science, the latest rage in teaching science. Also a writer and excellent speaker, he has written books on entrepreneurship, life values and parenting and speaks on topics such as leadership and management.

Ms. Francie Lacnilao is the Directress of The Learning Tree Center, an elementary education institution dedicated to the holistic development of children. The Learning Tree Center has been recognized for its non-traditional ways of teaching and educating its students.

Ms. Maricel Pangilinan is a multi-awarded actress turned "mompreneur" and writer/columnist. She is the author of the best-selling book "Mommy Talk" and columnist of the same in the Philippine Star. A well-known parenting advocate in the country, she is a convener of the Philippine Parenting Convention.

Mr. Chot Reyes is the coach of our national basketball team and President of coachcom.inc, a business and executive coaching company. The former coach of the Coca-Cola Tigers, he is a well-known sports figure in the country and has also made his mark as a motivational speaker with his talks on "How to Transform Your Family into a Team."

Dr. Nina Yuson is the President of the Museo Pambata and the Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Committee of the World Board of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. She is also a writer of children's books.

Dr. Grace Koo is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of the Philippines teaching post-graduate courses. She was a recipient of the UP Chancellor's Award for Most Outstanding Teacher in 2000. A frequent speaker on parenting and education, a voracious reader and classical music advocate.

Consumer Business Head of Globe Telecom, Ferdinand M. Dela Cruz, underscored the importance of instilling responsible mobile connectivity to Globe Gizmo's young subscriber base. "Advancements in communications technology serve not as a stand-in for human contact, but as an enhancer of existing relationships," says Dela Cruz. "And through Globe Gizmo, Globe continuously strives to strengthen the bond between parent and child," he adds.

Gizmo Youth Debate takes on responsible mobile usage

To mark the launch of GAB, Globe Gizmo Prepaid initiated the first ever public debate for children at the elementary school level. Held at the Claro M. Recto Hall of the University of the Philippines last Sept. 12, 2005, the tournament posed the controversial issue of whether children should be allowed to use mobile phones in school.

The board chose The Learning Tree Child Growth Center, a progressive educational institution, as the pilot school for the Globe Gizmo Debate Tournament. Months before the actual debate, interested students from grades four to six signed up for workshops and seminars facilitated by former champion student debater Fabian Mangahas. The special classes helped the children fine tune their arguments and hone their public speaking skills. These students were eventually formed into The Learning Tree Debate Society from which the tournament participants were chosen.

The British Parliamentary System format was chosen for the debate. Government teams argued for banning mobile phones because it was a distraction, encouraged children to spend, and could be used for cheating. Opposition teams, on the other hand, focused on the connectivity and learning that mobile phones could provide, emphasizing that mobile ownership itself could help children learn the meaning of responsibility. "Don't underestimate us just because we're kids. Having mobile phones in school will help us practice self-control," asserts Mishka Ligot of the Opening Opposition team.

According to Cathy Santamaria, Globe Head of Segment Marketing, the group was convened by Globe Gizmo Prepaid in line with its objective of promoting responsible mobile parenting. "As the country's first prepaid mobile phone brand for children, Globe Gizmo Prepaid is committed to initiating mobile innovations that are age-appropriate and beneficial to the holistic development of the Filipino child," she adds.

Bringing a day of fun and wonder to the Baseco kids

The joy of learning and discovery can brighten the life of any child, and those from underprivileged

communities are particularly in need of this special gift. Through the GAB, Globe Gizmo brought a day

of fun and wonder to less fortunate children from Barangay Baseco in Tondo, Manila last December.

The residents of Baseco were struggling to recover from the effects of several large fires which ravaged their community. Globe Gizmo and GAB's outreach program brought new hope to these families through the simple act of giving their children a chance to learn and play in a fun, safe, and nurturing environment.

About a hundred Baseco kids enjoyed a tour through the Museo Pambata and a special presentation courtesy of Mad Science. The youngsters, mostly aged 8 to 12 years old and studying in elementary schools near their area, arrived bright and early at the Museo, accompanied by designated chaperones from their community. They were warmly welcomed by Museo Pambata President Dr. Nina Yuson and celebrity parent

Anthony Pangilinan, along with representatives from Globe Gizmo and The Parenting Company. After having some morning snacks, the children eagerly explored the different rooms of the Museo, led by friendly tour guides.



As they assembled for lunch, the children excitedly recounted the morning's activities. Five-year-old Daniel beamed happily as he shared, "Nag-enjoy po ako saka marami akong natutunan." ("I enjoyed it a lot and learned many things.") Meanwhile, a little girl in fifth grade named Regie said: "Masaya po ako kasi natuto ako sa paglalaro at pakikinig." ("I'm happy because I learned through playing and listening.")

The project was part of the GAB's efforts to promote children's right to quality education and Globe Gizmo's contribution to the holistic development of the Filipino child.

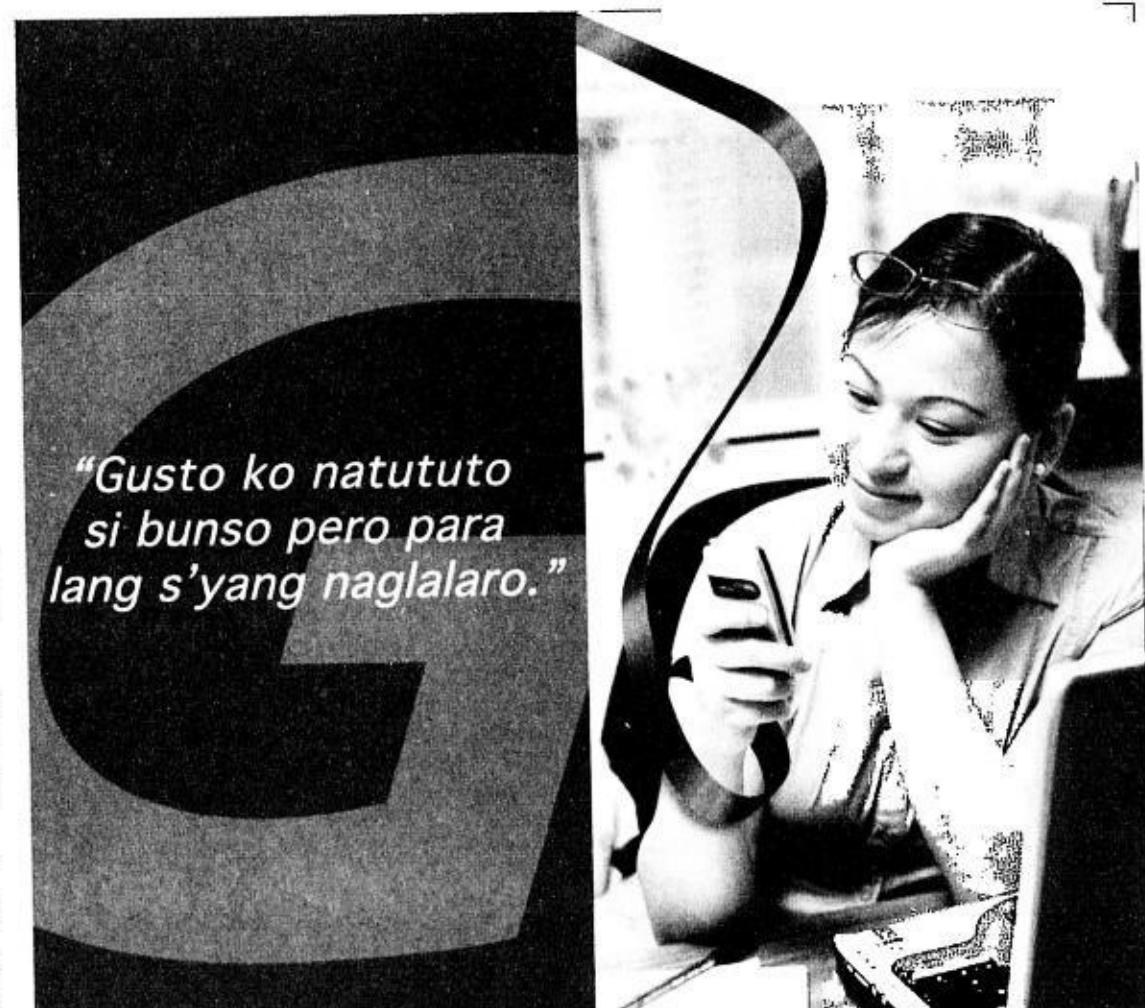
GAB designs Globe Gizmobits for kids

Learning has become more fun and enjoyable for kids with daily educational tips received as text for free with Gizmobits.

Developed by GAB, Gizmobits include instructive text messages that ensure that kids are getting new, exciting, reliable and helpful information.

Globe Gizmo is also packed with mobile parenting features to ensure uninterrupted fun and learning.

There's Emergency Text that allows the kid to send emergency text messages in the absence of load. Another feature is the Quick Text that lets the kid send instant messages via a simple combination of numbers in the keypad. Low Load Alert functions as a SOS signal to the parents that their kid already needs reloading. Finally, Word Up—a language tool that consists of dictionary, thesaurus, puzzles, translations, and vocabulary features.

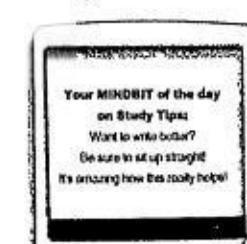


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WHAT'S INSIDE

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TOYOTA Otis' Joe Devance works around the blocking arm of Magnolia's Kelly Williams during their game yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

Juvic
4 shots
down in
Macau

MACAU—JUVIC Pagunsan birdied three of the four par-5 holes for a one-under-par 70 yesterday in the first round of the \$300,000 Macau Open at the Macau Golf and Country Club.

Pagunsan, who easily hurdles the Asian Tour qualifying, then won his first pro tournament at the Country Club in Laguna two months ago, posted nines of 33-37 and trailed first-round leader Marcus Booth of Australia by four strokes.

The Filipino ace finished with five birdies against four bogeys and was tied for ninth place along with nine others.

Former Philippine Open champion Gerald Rosales shot a 72 on nines of 35-37, followed by Cookie La'O with a 73 (37-36).

But the three other Filipinos in the event serving as the last stop before next week's Philippine Open at Wack Wack will need low rounds today to survive the cut.

Jerome Delaite struggled to a 77, Antonio Murakami had a 79 and Danny Zarate had an 81.

Taiwan's Lin Wen Tang trailed Booth by a stroke with a 67.

Sparks nip Spinners, corner No. 1 seeding

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TOYOTA Otis swept into the semifinals on a high note following a morale-boosting 89-85 overtime victory over Magnolia Ice Cream yesterday in the PBL Unity Cup at the Olivarez Sports Center.

Already safely through to the next round, the Sparks refused to take it easy, finally overcoming the Spinners in the extra period to clinch their 10th win in 14 games.

The win not only avenged their first-round loss (81-77) to Magnolia but also the franchise's first victory over the powerhouse Spinners since joining the league in 2004.

"That's our purpose, to enter the semifinals on a high note," said Toyota coach Louie Alas.

Magnolia dropped to 6-7 and will have to face off against bitter rival Rain or Shine (7-6) on Saturday to decide which team gets a twice-to-beat advantage going into the quarterfinals.

The Sparks did very well from the charity lane in the last 39.6 seconds of the extra period, with Boyet Bautista, Jonathan Aldave and Fil-America Joe Devance all nailing two free throws each.

In the second game, Hapee-PCU salvaged something from a bleak conference by ending the eliminations with a 78-74 upset over semifinalist Montaña. The Jewels dropped to 10-3, while the Teeth masters closed out with a 4-10 record.

The scores:
First Game
TOYOTA OTIS 89—Aldave 19, Devance 16, Coronel 13, Casio 10, Bautista 8, Andaya 6, Daa 6, Rodriguez 4, Fajardo 3, Orela 2, Alcaraz

2, Larong 0, Cabahug 0.

MAGNOLIA 85—Williams 28, Santos 22, Chan 11, Rizal 7, Isip 5, Misolas 5, Almeda 4, Co 3, Valenzuela 0, Barcellano 0, Te 0, Cuter 0.

Quarters: 18-11, 38-29, 58-49, 79-79, 89-85.

Second Game
HAPEE 78—Belga 15, Espinas 12, Castro

2, Moreno 9, Sanz 8, Bucua 5, Canlas 4, Garrido 3, Nallon 2, Solls 2, Razon 2, Amparado 2, Bacul 0.

MONTAÑA 74—Compton 16, Juntilla 12, Bono 8, Magpayo 8, Dela Cuesta 6, Rodriguez 5, Bonus 4, Vergara 3, Evangelista 2, Bagulon 2, Alblancio 0.

Quarters: 21-24, 35-47, 56-61, 78-74.

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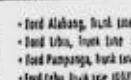
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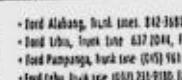
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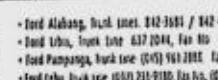
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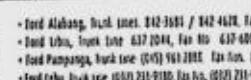
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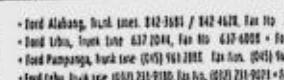
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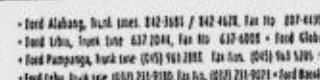
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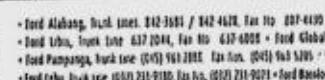
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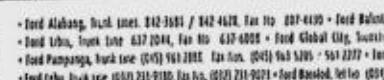
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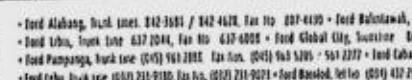
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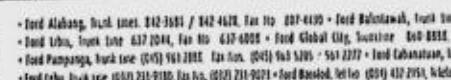
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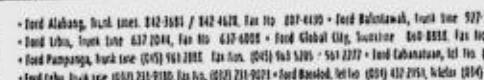
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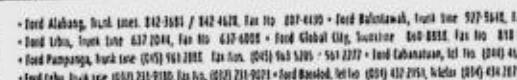
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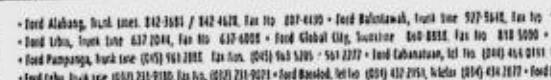
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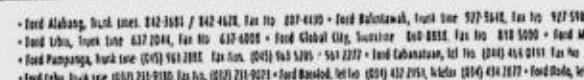
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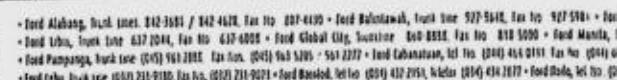
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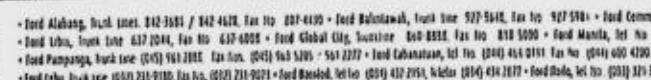
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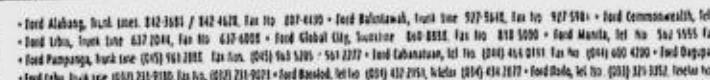
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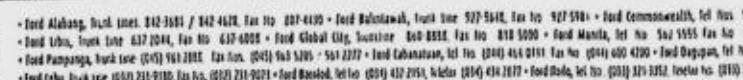
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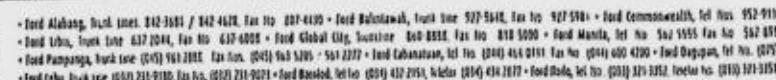
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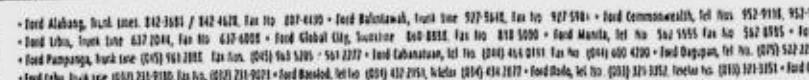
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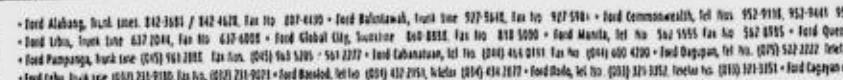
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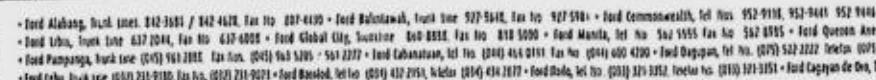
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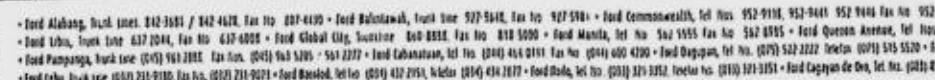
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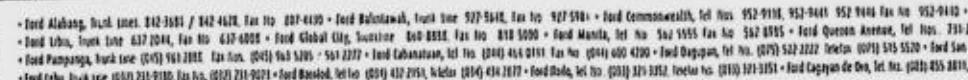
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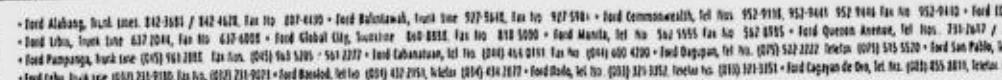
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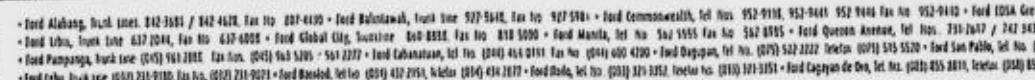
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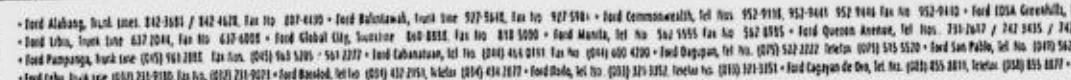
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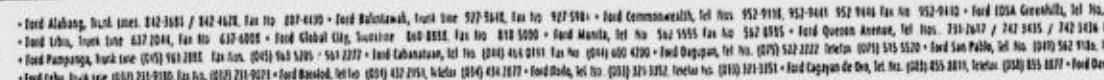
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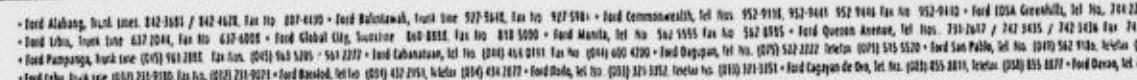
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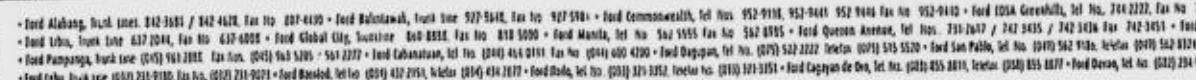
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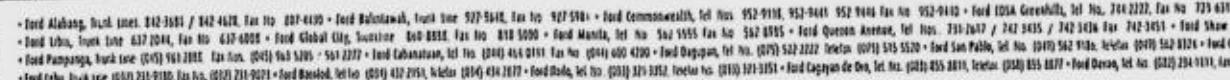
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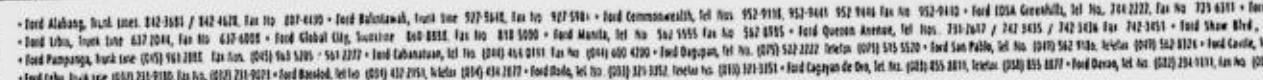
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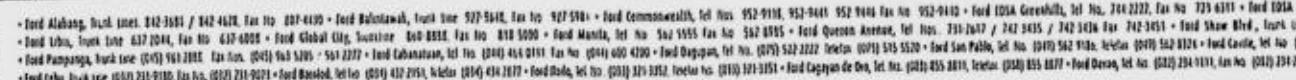
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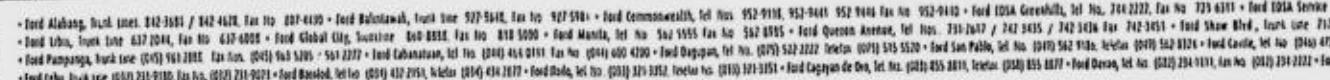
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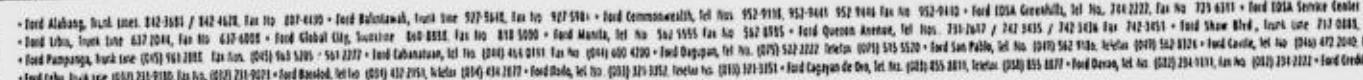
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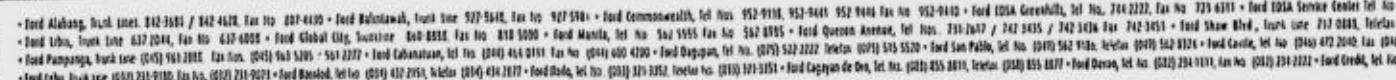
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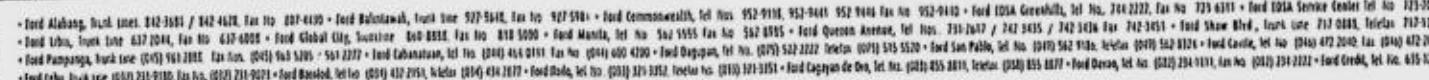
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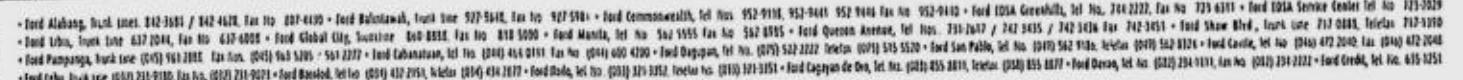
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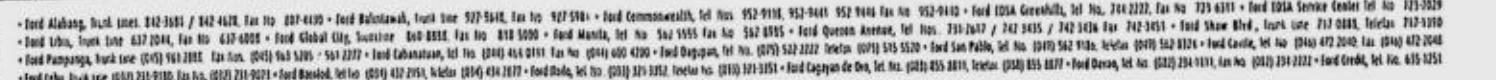
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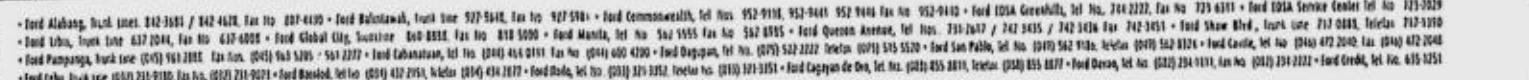
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It's thriller night in playoffs

James, Cavs push Pistons to the brink

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—All series long, the Detroit Pistons huffed and puffed. On Wednesday night, it was LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers who blew their house in.

A stunning role reversal on the Cavs' fairy tale ride?

Maybe not.

"It's just basketball," James said. "They're not the Big, Bad Wolf. And we're not the Three Little Pigs."

James scored 32 points and assisted on Drew Gooden's game-winning shot to lead the Cavs to an 86-84 victory over Detroit—their third straight win en route to a 3-2 lead in the second-round series.

The Pistons, on the brink of elimination after two straight trips to the NBA Finals, have not been giving much respect to the Cavs, who are in the second round for the first time since 1993.

That should change

now, but will it be too late for the big, bad Pistons?

Game 6 in the best-of-seven series is Friday night in Cleveland, and if the Pistons force a Game 7, they will be back on their home court Sunday.

"LeBron is playing unbelievably, and they're playing with a lot of confidence," Detroit coach Flip Saunders said. "But it doesn't mean the series is over, we just have to revert to what we did for much of the season."

Ben Wallace blew a chance to give the Pistons the lead for the first time since early in the second quarter when he missed two free throws with 40 seconds left. That left one of the NBA's worst free-throw shooters 0-for-7 for the game, which remained tied at 84.

James deferred to Gooden on the ensuing possession, and the power forward came through with a low-post basket to put the Cavs ahead by two with 27 seconds left.

"I took a picture of the basket," Gooden said. "That's what my freshman coach in high school used to tell me, take my time and make the shot."

After a timeout, Donyell Marshall blocked Tayshaun Prince's shot in the lane and James tipped a rebound—off Lindsey Hunter's missed jumper—to teammate Eric Snow, who

tossed the ball down the court to kill time.

The Pistons had the ball back with 1.9 seconds left, but could not get a shot off to try to force overtime—or win the game they didn't seem to deserve.

"That was about as perfect a game of basketball as you can play against that team," Marshall said.

Cleveland beat Detroit 74-72 and 86-77 to even the series after being routed in Game 1 and losing Game 2 by six points after a big deficit.

After losing Game 3 in Cleveland, Rasheed Wallace guaranteed Game 4 would be the last game played there because the Pistons would close out the series in Game 5.

"Everybody wrote us off, but we started to get some confidence in the second half of Game 2 and we've just kept it going," Cavs reserve Damon Jones said.

Detroit hopes to draw from its postseason experience. Before the Pistons beat the Los Angeles Lakers in the 2004 NBA Finals, they fell behind New Jersey 3-2—with three straight losses—before winning on the road and at home to advance to the conference finals.

• NBA on STAR SPORTS—Phoenix vs LA Clippers (10 a.m. live, 7 p.m. replay)

Spurs' title bid alive and kicking

SAN ANTONIO—AFTER one wild, late loss, then another, the San Antonio Spurs could only shake their heads.

Now the Mavericks know the feeling.

With the conference finals in their sights, Dallas was turned away by Tim Duncan making his first 12 shots and scoring 36 points, Tony Parker scoring 27 and the Spurs withstanding two jump balls and two shots in the final 6.3 seconds for a 98-97 victory Wednesday night.

By winning Game 5 of this amazing second-round series, San Antonio forced a sixth game Friday night in Dallas. It'll be hard to top this one, but that's what everyone thought after Games 3 and 4.

"We had the mentality during this game that we had in the other games—one steal, one shot, one rebound, one basket has made the difference," said Spurs forward Manu Ginobili, whose free throw with 1:59 left wound up being the game's final point.

The Spurs knew they could still beat the Mavs and expected to do so once they returned home.

"I haven't seen four games that have been this close," Ginobili said. "This just shows how evenly matched these two teams are. It is crazy how a single play can decide the game."

The Spurs ended their first three-game losing streak of the season. By getting within 3-2 in the



TIM DUNCAN'S hulking presence keeps San Antonio's hopes afloat.

series, the Mavericks face the pressure of winning at home or having to return to San Antonio for Game 7.

"We didn't expect them to roll over," Dallas' Jerry Stackhouse said. "They're the world champs. They did what they're supposed to do. Every possession in the game meant something."

The Mavericks had two chances to win in the bizarre final sequence, but Jason Terry missed a 15-foot fadeaway, then Dirk Nowitzki—who had 31 points, his high for the series—missed a tip-in chance at the buzzer.

Both players took the blame for the loss. Terry said he should've driven to the basket ("I settled right there. It's definitely my fault.") and Nowitzki lamented not catching the ball and putting it back up.

"I probably had enough time to take a shot," he said. "We didn't lose the game in the last two possessions. We had plenty of opportunities to win. It's a tough loss, but that's basketball."

Nowitzki's first 3-pointer of the series tied it at 95, and the ball was back in his hands with under 10 seconds left. That's when things turned wacky.

Nowitzki went up for a go-ahead 8-footer in the lane when Bruce Bowen—who surprisingly hadn't been covering him much all game—swept in from behind and put his hand over the ball. It was clearly a jump ball with 6.3 seconds left in the game and five seconds left on the shot clock.

"I was just fortunate enough to get my hand over the ball," Bowen said. "He was raising up. I think he felt he got enough space in between me and him at that point and he went to go pull up."

"We didn't want to go on vacation yet," Ginobili said.

CLEVELAND superstar LeBron James (right) leaves Tayshaun Prince of the Detroit Pistons biting dust on the way to a slam dunk in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference semifinals.

AP

Bonds 'Babe' run chase takes another vacation

HOUSTON, TEXAS—BARRY BONDS TOOK A night off from his pursuit of the all-time Major League Baseball home run record Wednesday but the San Francisco Giants completed a three-game sweep in Houston with a 10-1 romp.

Bonds sat out one night after being hit in the shoulder by a pitch from Houston's Russ Springer, who received a standing ovation as a result.

Nagged by accusations of steroid doping and numerous links to the BALCO steroid scandal, 41-year-old Bonds has been cheered only by home fans in his quest to match Babe Ruth for

second on the all-time US homer list with 714.

Bonds, stuck on 713 for eight games, is idle Thursday as the Giants travel to Bay Area-rival Oakland, where Bonds is expected to play three games starting Friday as a designated hitter.

Battling nagging knee and elbow injuries, Bonds is signed only through next season but would likely need to play at least one more season to approach the all-time homer mark of 755 by Hank Aaron.

Bonds' agent has said he would consider offers for next year and an American League club like Oakland might be an answer rather than a

National League club like the Giants.

American League clubs feature designating hitters at the plate instead of pitchers while National League teams force batters to pitch. AL clubs would give Bonds a chance to swing for the fences without fielding if he plays in 2007.

NEW YORK—CLEVELAND Cavaliers forward LeBron James was the leading voter on the All-NBA first team, which included Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant and Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash.

Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki and Miami center Shaquille O'Neal rounded out the first team, announced Wednesday by the league.

James, who averaged 31.4 points, 7.0 rebounds and 6.6 assists in leading the Cavaliers to their first playoff appearance in eight years. Michael Jordan, Oscar Robertson and Jerry West are the only other players in NBA history to average at least 31 points, seven rebounds and six assists in a season.

James received 116 first-place



O'NEAL

votes and 610 total points from the panel of 126 media members.

Bryant, who led the league with 35.4 points a game, was selected to the team for the fourth time. He scored 50 or more points six times this season.

Nash, who won the MVP award for the second straight season, led the league with 10.5 assists. Nowitzki averaged a career-high 26.6 points and led the Mavericks with 9.0 rebounds.

O'Neal made the team for the seventh straight season and the eighth overall. He averaged 20 points, 9.2 rebounds and led the league in field goal percentage (60 percent) for the ninth time, tying Wilt Chamberlain for the most all-time.



NASH

World Cup: Japan sees 'fishy' omen

YOKOHAMA—IF THE FORECASTS are to be believed, Japan's players in next month's World Cup are small fish in a big pond.

An aquarium in Yokohama is organizing a piscine World Cup, in which fish the colors of national teams fight for a ball packed with bait in a tank holding two goalposts.

It's not the best showing for the home team.

Japan—whose blue jerseys on the football field are represented in the tank by Blue Palettes Surgeonfish—seem to have less fighting spirit than Brazil, played by Yellow Tang.

"The Blue Palettes Surgeonfish tend to stay at a corner of the

fish tank while Yellow Tang is more active," said Osamu Masubuchi, a spokesman for the Hakkeijima Sea Paradise in Yokohama, south of Tokyo.

Asian champions Japan has been drawn in a tough group at the World Cup including five-time champions Brazil, Croatia and Australia.

The match is held twice a day at feeding time at the aquarium's aqua museum.

The aquarium will later feature fish bearing the colors of other teams.

"As it is the time of the season for excursions by schoolchildren, they are cheering for the fish," Masubuchi said.

AP

FC Barcelona rules Champions League

SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE—WITH ALL THE stars on the field, no one thought Juliano Belletti would be the one to make the difference in the Champions League final.

Not even Belletti. But the Barcelona right back came on the field with 19 minutes to go Wednesday and soon scored the deciding goal to give the Spanish champions a 2-1 win over 10-man Arsenal to win Europe's most prestigious club competition.

Arsenal, which played with 10 men from the 18th minute after goalkeeper Jens Lehmann was red-carded, took the lead in the 37th at Stade de France when Sol Campbell headed in the first goal.

Samuel Eto'o equalized for Barcelona in the 76th minute, and Belletti scored the winning goal in the 81st.

Henrik Larsson found Belletti on the run, and the Brazilian charged through the Arsenal defense and sent his angled shot off replacement goalkeeper Manuel Almunia and into the net for his first goal in a European competition.

"Scoring a goal in the Champions League is very difficult for a full back," Belletti said. "I thought this afternoon that perhaps I would have played, but I knew it was difficult. The Champions League is for all the people who don't appear in the press. It's for everyone."

Arsenal, which was playing in its first Champi-

ons League final, lost Lehmann when he brought down Eto'o just outside the Arsenal area.

Still, Arsenal took a 1-0 halftime lead after Campbell headed in Thierry Henry's free kick.

Henry squandered a chance to add a second goal, shooting straight at Barcelona goalkeeper Victor Valdes in the second half.

It was a disappointing homecoming for Henry, whose team had gone a Champions League record 10 games without conceding a goal. And the France striker was furious with Norwegian referee Terje Haage.

"I don't know if the ref had a Barcelona shirt on or something," Henry said. "If they don't want us to win it, just say it right from the start."



BARCELONA'S Juliano Belletti celebrates his crucial goal.

Bernis regains Samsung lead by one stroke

LIPA CITY—JUN BERNIS BOUNCED BACK with a 3-under par 69 yesterday and needed a double bogey by Paul Echavez on the 18th hole to regain a one-stroke lead heading into the final round of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour at the Summit Point and Country Club.

Bernis, a former national amateur champion, bucked a double bogey on No. 3 to tame the tough par-72 layout with six birdies. That 69 boosted him back on top with a 213 aggregate. He led the field with a 71 after the first round.

Echavez, who also fired a 69 to grab the 36-hole lead, actually padded his lead to five with three birdies after nine holes only to sputter coming home with a 40 and a 73.

The 17-year-old Echavez, now training under the National Caddies Open program, bogeyed Nos. 11 and 15. He dropped out of the lead when he needed two extra shots before holing out on the 18th.

Kim Chang-hoi, the former champion of this annual event sponsored by Samsung, matched Bernis' 69 and moved up to third with 218. He

would need to come up with a stronger final round to have a chance of nailing the crown.

Otherwise, it would be a two-man affair in the chase for top honors in this second leg of the five-stage circuit, backed by TaylorMade, C-Lium Fibre, Microtel, Titleist and Custom Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbolt.

Gary Sales struggled with a 74 and fell into a tie with Ronnie Torrecampo (73) at 222 while Joseph Labajo shot a 75 and shared sixth place with jungolfer Gino Bunyi at 225.

The three other survivors were Lee Dong Geun (76-226), Rufino Bayron (76-226) and Chris de los Santos (79-229).

Meanwhile, Yoon Sung-bin shot a 73 to take a two-stroke lead over Mandred Guango (75) in Class A of the men's division of this tournament supported by Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT Sports Plus as partners. Michael Mendoza stood three shots behind with a 76.

Benny Hurtado came up with a 75 to post a four-shot Class B lead over Virgilio Abanilla, Jr., Allan Alegre and VJ Vasandani, who all had 79s.



BACK ON TOP: Jun Bernis hacks out of deep rough.

Asian beach football stint for RP squad



MEMBERS of the RP team with delegation head and coach Mike Athab (extreme left, standing).

RP junior netters advance

SEVENTH SEED THE PHILIPPINES lost to No. 2 Japan, 0-3, but finished second in its group yesterday and advanced to the quarterfinals of the World Juniors Tennis Championships Asia-Oceania zonal qualifying tournament at the Pusat Tennis Kemayoran court in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Filipinos picked their second win at the expense of Singapore, 3-

0, before losing to the Japanese, who topped Group 4 with a 3-0 record.

The RP squad of Francis Casey Alcantara, Akio Sy and Kim Ivor Saraza, will next face top seed China.

Unseeded New Zealand, unbeaten in Group 3, will meet sixth seed Indonesia, third seed India will battle fourth seed Chinese Taipei, while Japan will challenge No. 8 Korea.

The RP team, which is also supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, is made up of Ali Bernard Go, Nestorio Margarito Jr., Victorino Troyo, Luisito Brillantes, Wilson de la Cruz, Richard Betita, Philip Cesar Caballero, Eduard Sacapano, Dan Araneta, Joebel Bermudo, Emerito Caligdong, and Winnie Subere.

THE PHILIPPINES HAS EARNED the right to represent Southeast Asia in the first FIFA-organized Asian qualifying tournament on May 22 to 26 in Dubai, where the top three finishers will compete in the World Cup Beach Football Championships in Brazil later this year.

The Asian teams will be joined by their counterparts from Europe, North America, and South America. Brazil won the world invitational championship it hosted last year.

Bracketed with Japan and Iran, the Philippine team, made up mostly of Army and Air Force players, needs at least a win to have a chance to qualify. The teams in the other group are China, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates.

The team will be headed by Beach Football Association of the Philippines president Mike Athab.

"The Philippines was selected by FIFA to represent Asia because of our long history of playing beach football," said Athab. "I believe we have good chances of qualifying despite the fact that Japan placed fourth in last year's world championship."

The RP team, which is also supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, is made up of Ali Bernard Go, Nestorio Margarito Jr., Victorino Troyo, Luisito Brillantes, Wilson de la Cruz, Richard Betita, Philip Cesar Caballero, Eduard Sacapano, Dan Araneta, Joebel Bermudo, Emerito Caligdong, and Winnie Subere.

DO WE NEED STRICTER REGULATION OF basketball? Absolutely.

The Tejada case: Is GAB remiss in its duty?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Inigo



inadvertently prevented full emergency provisions for the PBA."

I called the office of GAB chair Eric Buhain twice (on Wednesday and Thursday) to get a reaction, but the secretary said his boss was not attending a meeting. At any rate, I hope the GAB will not take the Tejada case lightly and sidestep the issue. Is it only when a terrible accident such as this happens that sports authorities are forced to move? And then, when the rage is over, what is left?

It's something to crow about. Former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino has been named basketball commissioner of the NCAA, once the country's most glamorous school league. A genuine sportsman, Bernardino is the best choice to give vim and vigor to the association which is celebrating its 82nd season. This year's host is College of St. Benilde.

The 58-year-old Bernardino has vast experience in basketball. He became the fifth PBA commissioner in 1994, learning the ropes from four commissioners before him, namely Leo Prieto, Mariano Yenko, Rudy Salud and Rey Marquez. He resigned from the PBA in 2002 for health reasons, but being a workaholic, Bernardino simply would not walk away from sports.

A former varsity player of the UP Ma-

roons, Bernardino introduced several changes in the PBA. In his first year, he improved the quality of officiating, modified the 25-second shot clock and instructed the referees to give more leeway to the defensive player.

Bernardino also took steps to make the league more wholesome by meeting with members and officials of the various fan clubs of the teams, asking them to refrain from cursing or hurling invectives at the referees and players of the opposing teams.

There are many Filipino athletes, living or dead, who are worthy of emulation, but only a handful have been showered with international acclaim. One of the elite few was the late tennis champion Felicísimo "Totoy" Ampon. Only 5-foot-3, Ampon stood 10 feet tall, playing in many major tennis tournaments around the world, including the Wimbledon in London. At Wimbledon, Ampon topped the Plate Series, a tournament among the first and second round losers, defeating Heraldo Weis of Argentina in the final played at court No. 1. Queen Mary awarded the winner's trophy to Ampon at the Queen's box at center court.

"They gave me a standing ovation and I had goose pimples all over," Ampon said in a post-game interview way back in the 1970s. "The crowd was elated to see an Asian win the Plate Series, a first in the history of Wimbledon."

The British media called him the "Mighty Atom" for that sterling performance at Wimbledon.

Then at the French Open at the world-renowned Roland Garros courts, Ampon went as far as the quarterfinals, where he faced No. 1 seed Frank Sedgman. After five nail-biting sets, Sedgman beat Ampon, 4-6, 6-3, 6-8, 7-5, 7-5.

Spring cagers sweep Picaa Open

SPRING COOKING OIL SUBDUES King's Bakeshop, 70-66, Wednesday night to retain the Picaa Open basketball crown via an unprecedented sweep at the EAC gym in Manila.

Marvin Yambo and eventual MVP winner Aldrin Morante sparkled for the Cooking Oil Masters of national shooter Nathaniel "Tao" Padilla by delivering the goods when it mattered most.

Yambo scored six of his team-high 13 points in the payoff period, while Morante joined Danny Capobres in holding off King's Bakeshop's rally late in the third.

"We're very happy to win the title

again," said coach Efren "Yong" Garcia.

"The boys played hard all the way until the end."

Padilla praised his charges for their hard work and determination.

Spring Cooking Oil swept all its assignments in the two-round tournament sponsored by Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, Chloe Lightings and Tomish Café (Dapitan).

The Cooking Oil Masters led by as many as 16 points but King's Bakeshop refused to give up without a fight. King's closed in at 59-62 with 1:05 left behind an 8-2 run triggered by Rommel David, but Gilbert Neo nailed a three-pointer

from the side to make it 65-59.

King's threatened anew at 63-66 with only 12 seconds remaining but Mario Reyes and Mark Yee canned four free throws to seal Spring's triumph.

Earlier, Pearl Hotel-Emilio Aguinaldo College finished third by beating Homer Cagers, 94-86, in overtime.

The scores:
SPRING 70—Yambo 13, Morante 12, Bamson 9, Neo 8, Yeo 6, Manuel 6, Tiongco 5, Reyes 4, De Castro 4, Capobres 3, Cuenca 0.

KING'S 66—David 19, Palaganas 16, Bernardo 8, De Guia 7, Lilonjua 6, Zablan 3, Marucot 2, Mendivil 2, Gadiane 2, Corbin 1.

Quarters: 13-18, 38-30, 53-44, 70-66



SKIPPER Rodel Manuel receives the Picaa trophy from Jules Castillo, press officer of Manila Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna. In the middle is Picaa commissioner Orly Bauzon.

Reyes outlasts Orcollo for 4th straight victory

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—FILIPINO HALL OF Famer Efren "Bata" Reyes turned back compatriot Dennis Orcollo, 11-8, Wednesday to remain in the winner's bracket of the \$160,000 Enjoypool.com 9-Ball Championship at the Riviera Hotel and Casino in this gambling mecca.

With his fourth victory in a row, the 51-year-old Reyes forged a clash with Poland's A. Roszkowski who pulled off a similar 11-8 win against

Satoshi Kawabata of Japan. Reyes, already the winner of the IPT King of the Hill 8-Ball Shoot-out in Florida, last December, the Derby City Classic in Kentucky last January and the kickoff leg of the 2006 San Miguel Asian 9-ball Tour in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, recently, is the only other Filipino left in the thinning ranks of the winners' bracket.

Jose "Amang" Parica, the Philippines' finest player in the 1980s before migrating to the US, is scheduled to face Johnny "The Scorpion" Archer of the US in the

winners' side Thursday.

Should he hurdle Roszkowski, Reyes will face the winner between Ralf Souquet of Germany and Corey Deuel of the United States on Thursday.

The American posted back-to-back wins over Niels Feijen of the Netherlands, 11-6, and Filipino Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, 11-7, Wednesday.

Santos Sambajon became the latest Filipino to be ousted from the tourney that offers \$20,000 to the champion and \$10,000 to the runner-up.

Sambajon took his second defeat at the hands of Davis Reljik, 11-3, in the losers' bracket.

Reljik next faces Ernesto Dominguez of Mexico who nipped Masaki Tanaka of Japan, 11-9. The winner will clash with Orcollo.

Luat will battle the winner between Marcus Chamat of Sweden and Fabio Petroni of Italy.

If Parica wins, he will collide with the winner between Thorsten Hohmann of Germany and Charlie Williams. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*



STILL IN WINNERS' ROW: Efren "Bata" Reyes

TM-ABAP stint in Guagua, Pampanga

THE BIGGEST NAMES IN THE PHILIPPINE boxing team strut their wares as the Touch Mobile-ABAP Go for Gold brings its act to Plaza Burgos in Guagua, Pampanga, today.

Olympians Harry Tañamor and Violito Payla banner a star-studded cast composed of gold medalists in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

"Expect non-stop action from the first bout up to the final bout," said Abap president Manny T. Lopez, who thanked Mayor Ricardo Rivera and Councilor Richard Melencio for their support.

Sponsored by Touch Mobile and supported by Pacific Heights, the TM Go for Gold is the country's lone nationwide boxing on wheels.

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**PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER**

SPORTS

2 RP-Korea finals cap NTCC today

By Jong Arcano

GEN. TRIAS, CAVITE—IT'S ALREADY MIND-BOGGLING FOR SOMEONE LIKE Tootsie de Jesus to have reached a single-digit handicap in just 18 months of playing golf. Winning the National Tournament of Club Champions will make him feel like a magician.

Defying great odds, De Jesus of Tagaytay Highlands put himself on the brink of a major victory when he edged Zaldy Villa of Valley on the last hole to arrange a showdown with dreaded Korean Park Jong-soo of Eastridge for the men's division crown at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club course.

The 27-year-old Park, whose family has been in an out of the country since he was 8, recovered from a sluggish start to dominate Edmund Yee of Manila Southwoods in

the back nine and cruise to a 4&3 victory for a place in the final of the tourney co-presented by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. and INQUIRER Golf.

Teenier Kwon Ye-seul of Eagle Ridge threatened to make it an all-Korean affair by holding off Kathleen Uy of Cebu Country Club for a 2&1 win in the ladies division semifinals.

Kwon meets Vince Godio, representing Alabang and Sta. Elena, in the final. Godio, making good her promise to reach the title duel after a heartbreaking loss in the



MATCHES TODAY (8 a.m.)
Ladies final: Vince Godio vs Kwon Ye-seul
Men's final: Park Jong-soo vs Tootsie de Jesus

semis last year, outclassed young Cyna Rodriguez, 4&2, in a duel the jungolfer was expected to win.

The 18-hole finals starts at 8 a.m. with the protagonists returning to the Faldo course after going through the rigors of the Dye, Aoki and yesterday at the Norman site of the country's biggest golf complex.

Sponsors of the NTCC are Sta. Lucia Realty, Callaway as the official apparel, Isuzu the official vehicle, Titleist the official ball, PAL the official carrier, Chivas Regal, The Travel Club and Pacific Air Media. Platonics, the first locally assembled golf cart, is hole-in-one sponsor.

The winners today will get the chance to witness two HSBC-sponsored events in England and the United States while the losers settle for a choice of a premium driver plus a trip for two to any local destination. All players had earlier won other

items for each match they won including putters, Titleist balls, The Travel Club bags.

Villa suffered a defeat that will take some time to forget.

Battling his foe tooth and nail all day, Villa brought his match with De Jesus to the 18-hole all square. But Villa hooked his drive into the hazard not just once but twice and practically had to yield the match off the tee.

Win or lose against Park, De Jesus believes that he has achieved more than what he expected: "I'll just try to have as much fun tomorrow, knowing Park is such a good player."

De Jesus now carries a handicap of 6, barely a year and a half after picking up the game. He plays under the tutelage of pro Antonin Fernando at Wack Wack and credits his meteoric improvement to his strict discipline of playing as often as he could.

Gibson hopes to end slump at RP Open

KUALA LUMPUR—CANADIAN STALwart Rick Gibson hopes a timely return to Wack Wack Golf and Country Club for next week's Philippine Open would end his recent slump in form.

The 44-year-old veteran, who has lived in Manila for the past 17 years, was the winner at Wack Wack's fabled East course when the Philippine Open was last staged there in 2002.

A week before the Open's 90th edition, Gibson is pushing hard for history to repeat itself.

Four years ago, he entered the Open following a three-year hiatus but came out on top of the heap with a four-stroke victory at Wack Wack.

It was the second wind that he was

looking for in an illustrious career that includes nine other titles across Asia and Japan, as well as in Canada.

But he has made only three cuts from 10 tournaments this season.

Australian Adam Le Vesconte will defend his title next week. The top Filipinos who will challenge for the title include Angelo Que, Gerald Rosales, Juvic Pagunsan and Felix Casas.

There will not be any sale of tickets at the Philippine Open and spectators are welcomed to attend the 90th edition of the Championships.

The Asian Tour will also be producing a special two-hour highlights package of the event which will be shown across the region via ESPN StarSports.



GIBSON: Looking for second wind

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ENTERTAINMENT

Face of a young winner

By the Inquirer Entertainment Staff

Photos by Rudy Esperas

SAM CONCEPCION ONLY shrugs when people ask about some televoters' negative reaction to his winning the grand prize in ABS-CBN's recently concluded talent search, "Little Big Star (Big Division)."

Sam's voice changed drastically in the course of the six-month competition (he's at that awkward stage, only 12 when he joined). The "critics" found Sam's performance inconsistent, and rooted for another contestant.

"Okay lang po sa akin 'yun. It's really like that in contests. There were people who wanted Gian (Carlo Barbona) or Charice (Pempengco) to win. But many wished me luck, too," a self-assured Sam told INQUIRER Entertainment.

Prior to "LBS," Sam was in the youth-oriented program "Sineskela" on ABS-CBN and then "Astig" on ABS-CBN. He hosted Nickelodeon's "Whacked" and Kids Choice Awards in 2004 and 2005.

His first big break came in 2002, when he played the young protagonist in "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?" a production of Musical Theater Philippines. Months later, Sam played Edmund Pevensie in Trumpets' highly successful production of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Sam is managed by Stages, the same team behind the career of singer Christian Bautista.

The young champ is currently busy with other programs like "Super Inggo" and "Y Speak Live" on ABS-CBN. Officially, he said, Friday is his "rest" day, "pero nasisigitan pa rin po ng work."

And no, he hastily added, "I'm not complaining po."

And so it was on a Friday afternoon, clad in striped polo-shirt and ripped blue jeans, that Sam walked into the INQUIRER office for this interview. If he felt like it was work, he didn't show. He was unguarded, engaging and bubbly... and well, refreshingly young.

He talked about the "cool stuff" he won from the contest, friends he made, and the girl of his dreams.

Did you personally pick your winning song ("I Can't Stand Still" from the musical "Footloose")?

Tito Carlo (Orosa), Tito Audie (Gemora), Tito David (Cosico, his manager) and my dad—did. They're like a team.

Do you get formal training?

I've been with Trumpets since I was 8 or 9. Now, I'm 13. I was in Trumpets Playshop (workshop) for five years. I took up musical theater, street dancing and voice lessons with Teacher Lannie (Ligot), street dancing with the Maneuvres and Chinnie Nepumoceno.

I've done musicals—"The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe," "Mr. Noah's Big Boat"—and some corporate shows.

How did this help you in "Little Big Star"?

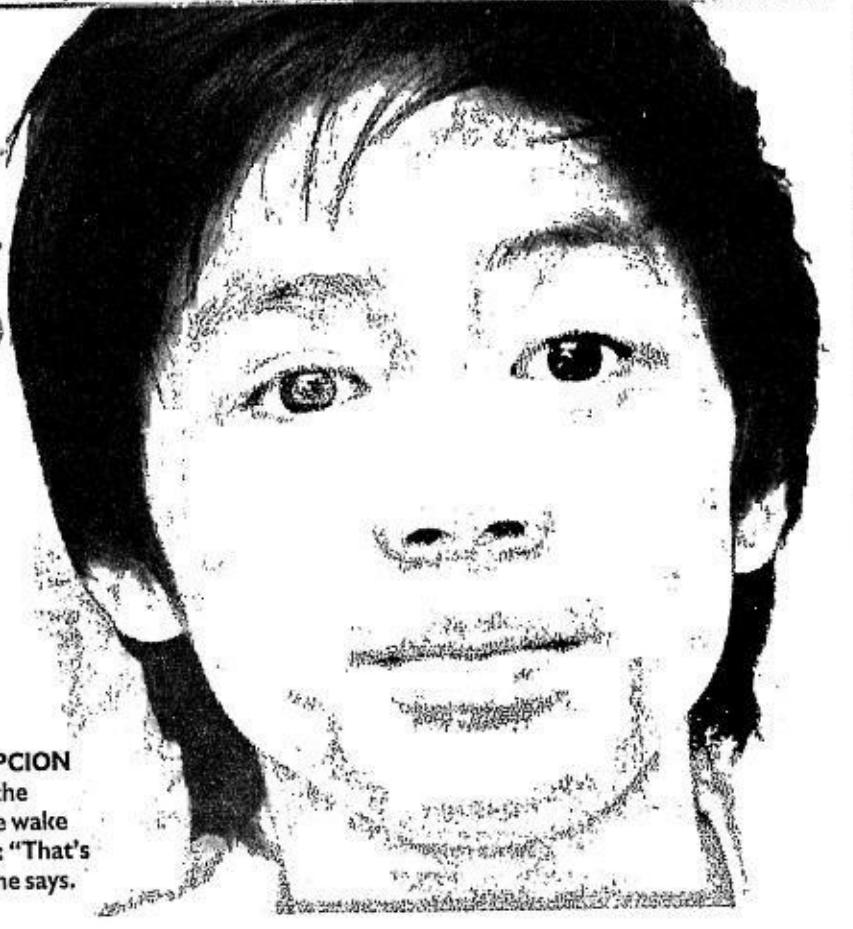
It helped a lot. I was comfortable on stage. It also helped in my singing and dancing. Although right now my voice is changing kaya mahirap.

How do you balance school and work?

I was absent a lot during "Little Big Star." My school (Christian Academy of Manila) helped me cope. My teachers gave me make-up quizzes and make-up homework.

I'm an incoming second year student.

SAM CONCEPCION
doesn't mind the
criticism in the wake
of his triumph: "That's
how it goes," he says.



What did you win as "Little Big Star" champ?

P1 million—minus 20 percent tax—a trip to Hong Kong Disneyland, franchise of a line of cologne and gifts from sponsors worth P30,000.

What will you do with all that money?

Still planning. I still don't have it. I might buy a van or a car, or just save it.

TAKE FIVE

How's your interaction with fellow contestants?

We'll still be part of "Little Big Star Season 2"—si Makisig (Morales), Kyle (Balili) and Rhap (Salazar) and then me, Charice and Gian. We'll be performing every Saturday.

Would you rather do TV or theater?

Pareho lang po.

Who are your mentors?

Tito Audie, Tito Carlo, Tito David and everyone from Stages.

What do they always tell you about performing?

To try to connect with the audience, to perform for them.

Did you expect to win?

Okay na rin po kami kahit third.

Who cheered for you the loudest?

My fans—the Samsters.

Are they mostly girls or boys? How old are they?

They're a mix. The youngest are 7 and 8 years old. Mas marami 'yung 13 years old. The oldest members are school principals, mommies and daddies. Global po ang membership. It has a website on Pinoy Exchange.

Weren't you the rapper on that Magi Sining sa Miso commercial?

Opo. I was 10 or 11 then. Mas marami pong commercials ang Daddy ko kaysa sa akin.

Do you have brothers or sisters who also act?

Yes. We're four in the family, I'm the third. Everyone is involved in theater. My mom and my dad met at the Metropolitan Theater. My eldest brother, Red, is also a theater actor. My second brother, Kevin, is also in Trumpets Playshop. The youngest, Gem, 9,

FACE/A2-4

"Gusto ko para kaming bestfriends mag-sharing ng anak ko."



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ICE AGE 2

PAMAHIN

M:1:III

REINCARNATION

SILENT HILL

POSEIDON

OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

THE WILD

D LUCKY ONES

APOYSA DIBBIBNG SAMAR

M:1:III

SM CITY MANILA

POSEIDON

M:1:III

REINCARNATION

SILENT HILL

POSEIDON

WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

AQUAMARINE

THE WILD

PAMAHIN

D LUCKY ONES

M:1:III

SM CITY STA. MESA

POSEIDON

OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

SILENT HILL

REINCARNATION

AQUAMARINE

POSEIDON

M:1:III

SM CITY BICUTAN

POSEIDON

REINCARNATION

OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

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OVER THE HEDGE

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SILENT HILL

THE WILD

D LUCKY ONES

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SM CITY DASMARINAS

POSEIDON

SILENT HILL

OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

REINCARNATION

AQUAMARINE

POSEIDON

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SM CITY BACOOR

POSEIDON

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M:1:III

REINCARNATION

D LUCKY ONES

SILENT HILL

AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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SM CITY CEBU

POSEIDON

OVER THE HEDGE

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GRANDMA'S BOY

D LUCKY ONES

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SM CITY DAVAO

POSEIDON

OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

SILENT HILL

AMERICAN SOLDIERS

POSEIDON

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OVER THE HEDGE

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SENTINEL

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AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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SUBMERGED

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SM CITY MINDANAO

SENTINEL

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AMERICAN SOLDIERS

POSEIDON

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SM CITY VVISAYAS

SENTINEL

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OVER THE HEDGE

M:1:III

AMERICAN SOLDIERS

POSEIDON

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SUBMERGED

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SM CITY CLARK

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AMERICAN SOLDIERS

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ENGAGED
Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman, ex-wife of actor Tom Cruise, is engaged to marry country music star and Grammy 2005 winner Keith Urban, his spokesperson said on Tuesday. Both are 38, and Australians. REUTERS

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11:55, 2:05, 4:15, 6:25, 9:05, 11:10
GP
THE DA VINCI CODE
12:40, 4:00, 7:25, 10:50
R-18
THE DA VINCI CODE
11:40, 2:50, 6:10, 9:40
R-18
POSEIDON
1:30, 3:55, 6:20, 8:45, 11: PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX	
1 OVER THE HEDGE	MTRCB GP 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 10:10PM LMF
2 THE DA VINCI CODE	MTRCB R-18 12.30, 3.35, 6.40, 9.45PM
3 THE DA VINCI CODE	MTRCB R-18 1.20, 4.25, 7.30, 10.35PM LMF
4 THE DA VINCI CODE	MTRCB R-18 11.45, 2.50, 5.55, 9.00PM
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THE DA VINCI CODE R18 1:15, 4:15, 7:15, 10:15	POSEIDON PG13 12:20, 2:40	THE DA VINCI CODE R18 11:30, 2:15, 5:15
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1 THE DA VINCI CODE
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7:30 - 10:30 R18

2 POSEIDON / THE DA VINCI CODE
11:15, 1:45, 4:15/
8:40, 9:50 PG13 / R18

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Now Showing

3 OVER THE HEDGE
11:30, 1:15, 3:20,
5:30, 7:45, 9:00 GP

4 THE DA VINCI CODE
10:55, 1:55, 4:55,
7:55, 10:50 R18

5 THE DA VINCI CODE
10:20, 1:20, 4:20,
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12:15 3:25 6:35 9:452 DA VINCI CODE
12:00 3:10 6:20 9:307 POSEIDON
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:503 DA VINCI CODE
11:30 2:40 5:50 9:008 DA VINCI CODE
11:45 2:55 6:05 9:154 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:30 2:40 5:50 9:009 DA VINCI CODE
2:25 5:35 8:45

5 OVER THE HEDGE

10 OVER THE HEDGE

ERMITA

638-7809 to 12

1 DA VINCI CODE

10:30 1:40 4:50 8:00

2 POSEIDON

12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

3 DA VINCI CODE

6 OVER THE HEDGE

12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 9:50

4 DA VINCI CODE

7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00

10:50 1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50

METRO EAST

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1 OVER THE HEDGE

5 DA VINCI CODE

1:00 4:00 7:00

2 DA VINCI CODE

6 DA VINCI CODE

12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

3 DA VINCI CODE

7 DA VINCI CODE

12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

4 POSEIDON

8 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

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3 DA VINCI CODE

6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

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Halle wants to be a mom

NEW YORK—ALL IS RIGHT IN THE world. The trees are green and magnificent in spring and my editor's fave, Ralph Fiennes, is garnering raves on Broadway in the play "Faith Healer." In fact, Ralph just earned a Tony Award nomination for this performance.

And to hear that the world is blessed with a baby girl from Tony Award winner Lea Salonga and Rob Chien—that is just wonderful. Congratulations, Lea and Rob! The new mom e-mailed us back right away. Nicole Beverly Chien made her entrance last Tuesday weighing 6 lb and 10 oz and measuring 19 inches.

Dante Basco Manila-bound

We learned from New Line Cinema (US) that Dante Basco is due in Manila to promote his movie with Antonio Banderas, "Take the Lead."

Dante, whom we profiled in this column last April, will arrive in the Philippines for a week's stay. The multi-talented Filipino-American—he is an actor, hip-hop/rap artist, poet, dancer and voice talent for Nickelodeon and Disney TV toons—is very excited about this trip.

We repeat what Antonio told us about Dante when we interviewed the Spanish actor: "Dante is a very good actor ... a very positive person to work with. He was very helpful, not only in front of the camera but also in the rehearsals. Because he is a little bit more mature than the rest of the kids, he brought the team together. Looking at Dante and at all of those kids was like seeing myself years ago."

Born in the Philippines

Philippine-born Mei Melancon has a small role as Psylocke in "X-Men: The Last Stand," which we saw here last Saturday evening. We asked director Brett Ratner about her during a press con.

Brett, who told us, "I want to be famous in the Philippines," said: "I first cast Mei in 'Rush Hour.' I met her during the audition and we became friends. Mei is a beautiful girl and a talented actress. I tend to cast a lot of actors of different ethnicities. In this movie, aside from Mei and Halle Berry, I also got Lance Gibson, who is Chinese, to play Spike; Dania Ramirez, who plays Callisto, is from the Dominican Republic; and so on. X-Men' is a multicultural comic book so I thought the movie should represent that more closely."

We interviewed the main cast, led by Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Famke Janssen, Anna Paquin and Ben Foster. In this third and last installment of the "X-Men" movie series about mutant heroes, a cure for mutancy causes an all-out war between those who support and oppose it.

Going back to the subject of babies, last Sunday being Mother's Day, motherhood—or the prospect of it—was the common thread of questions thrown at Oscar-winning actress Halle, who turns 40 this year. The actress, back as the white-haired Storm (who has the ability to control the weather), wants to have a baby. From the way she passionately talked about her desire to be a mom ... can the gods please bless this woman with a child?

In the production notes, you mentioned how as a child, you felt that if you could change yourself, your life would be better. What aspect in your life at the time did you want to change?

I was raised by a white mother. I am of biracial lineage, as you know. The image to look up to was my mother who was white, blue-eyed and blonde. I wondered why I didn't look like her. Maybe my life would be easier. So I wanted to change myself. As I grew, I learned that [having mixed race heritage] is the best thing about me.



HUGH JACKMAN, left, and Halle Berry, stars of "X-Men: The Last Stand," on a promo tour in New Mexico. They admit that having money allows them a lot of freedom. REUTERS

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales



You will turn 40 in August. Does that mean anything to you?

Honestly, it means something only because everybody is asking. I've never been one who celebrates my birthday. I didn't grow up ... defining myself by a number.

Sixteen was important because then I could get my driver's license. Twenty-one was important because I could have a glass of wine. I'm happy to be here, happy to be alive. I celebrate my feelings on a daily basis so I don't need my birthday just to feel that.

The last time we saw you, you talked about how important it is for you to have a child. Are you close to fulfilling this wish?

I realized when I turned 30 that I needed more than a career. I needed a better reason to wake up in the morning than to go to a movie set or to produce a movie. I'm a person who believes that

by putting that thought (having a baby) out there, it will make itself manifest one way or another. How, I have no idea but I feel it coming closer.

Are you in the process of getting pregnant?

I sit here pregnant-free (laughter).

In the process of adopting?

Right now, there's nothing to report on that front.

We read a lot about actors adopting children of different ethnicities. As a mixed-race child, how do you view that?

Being raised by a white mother

was one of the best things that could have happened to me. I don't see color; I see people for who they are. I think it's a wonderful thing.

When we spoke to Hugh earlier, one of the interesting questions was about how success and monetary gain buy him a certain amount of freedom. In your case, how has money liberated you?

It's wonderful to not worry about how you'll take care of yourself. Money has given me a lot of peace of mind and security. Money has enabled me to move my mother to California (next month, from Cleveland). Money has given me the means to help people whom I love and I care about. I don't have 10 cars and lots of diamonds. I save a lot because I'm always worried when this trip is going to stop.

How is your relationship with your mother?

We're extremely close to my mother. I left home when I was 17 and I've always lived away from her. I am so happy that, now that I am almost 40, she's moving to Los Angeles, about five blocks away from my house. Finally we can have coffee in the morning or a glass of wine together at night. I can just run over there and grab her to watch a movie or take her along on these great trips.

It's really nice that, in this phase of our lives, we can reconnect in a physical way. We can do little things together instead of when I normally see her, we have a week or two weeks and we cram so much into two weeks.

Do you care to talk about how you met your present boyfriend (Gabriel Aubry, a Canadian model) at a fashion photo shoot?

I don't really want to talk about him. That is so new and fresh.

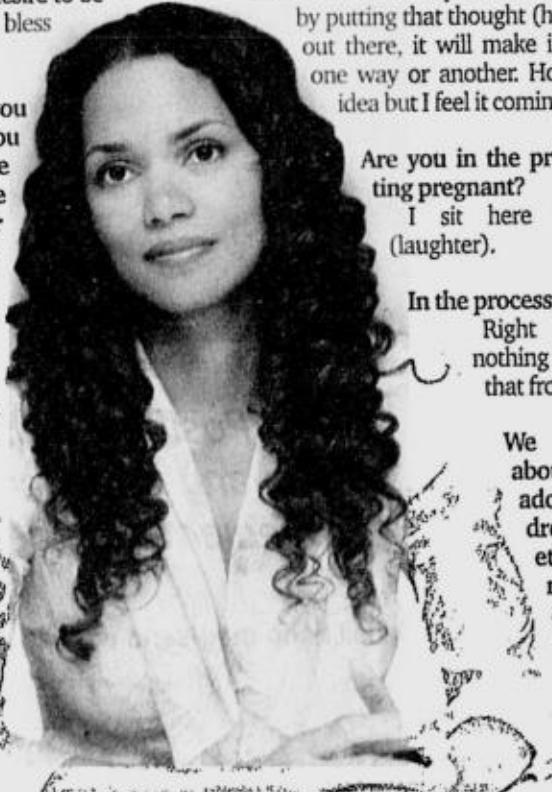
Okay then, how do you feel about Canadian men?

Canadian men are wonderful (laughter). Men are wonderful. I like men (laughter).

You are going from here to Cannes, where this film is going to be shown. Who are you bringing along?

I'm taking nobody. I've always wanted to go to Cannes. This is the first chance I have. I am going to enjoy it. I hear it's amazing, crazy, exciting and a mess all at the same time. So I'm excited.

(E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.)



And this is how not to act like a prince

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal



A Pinoy producer based in the US swears he will never ever invite the chanteuse to perform in his concerts again because her mom is a major headache. Clue: two vowels are prominent in the singer's name

'Chef' Donita

Now celebrating its fifth season, GMA 7's "Mobile Kushna" (10 a.m. Fridays) has former MTV VJ Donita Rose as host.

"I feel like I'm starting all over again," Donita reveals. "Hosting a cooking show is more challenging than being a VJ. I still have to prove my catalog."

She's done with counting down the top 10 hits. Now she'll help you count calories by whipping up healthy but yummy dishes.

True Faith Is back

For 14 years now, my all-time favorite band True Faith has been making some of the best OPM. Whether churning out hits from the studio or playing live in concerts here or out of the country (they had a successful US tour late last year), they're a tough act to beat.

After a two-year absence from the recording scene, the band (led

by Medwin Marfil, with Kenneth Ilagan and Eugene Marfil on guitars, Bimbo Yance on bass, Jake Lunacan on keyboards and Benedict Esguerra on drums) is now putting the finishing touches to their much awaited 11th CD under EMI. "Stray to be Found." Release date is in June. Check out the video for "Sa Piling Mo's" love theme, "Dahil Ika." Vote for it on MYX by texting, MYX VOTE DAHIL IKAW then send to 2366. For bookings call 0918-9203902. I never miss any of their shows. Check them out in Aruba Metrowalk every Wednesday and you'll see why True Faith is a

true Pinoy music icon.

Undie show

I first left the crowd screaming for more with its red hot male underwear fashion show at Ratsky's Morato, headlined by hunk Troy Montero. Two years later, Dickies proves it's still a fashion trend-setter. It recently unveiled the comfy and cool female teens' Dickies Girl underwear line with a fashion show that featured Jeni Hernandez, Richard Villanueva and Ara Mina.

Fifth 'ETK' week

I'm overjoyed to be the guest co-



TRUE Faith

host yet again on "ETK" tomorrow 4:30 p.m., ABS-CBN. I always have so much fun in the show with Ogie Diaz, Toni Gonzaga and the great staff, that I forgot it's supposed to be work. Catch "Entertainment Konk," where we fearlessly collect and select the juiciest show biz "kurek" stories.

Absolutely no fear

Speaking of being fearless, it's a choice we make.

I didn't make that up. Denise Lawrence, a Canadian life coach visiting Manila next week, will discuss this in three free public programs titled "Face Off (Shaking Hands with Fear, Anger & Pain).

Yes, sir, these bad omens in your head are very closely related to your life.

Catch her on Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. at St. Cecilia Hall, St. Scholastica's College, Manila; on Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. at Ayalin Center in Cebu, or on Thursday, 4:30 p.m., at Li'l Baguio, Call 890-7960 (Manila), 254-5975 (Cebu), or 445-5931 (Baguio).

For feedback e-mail wateringhollyshangirl@yahoo.com

An X-pedient smorgasbord

By Ruel S. De Vera

SO MUCH COULD HAVE GONE wrong. Like the comic-book mutants it revolves around, "X-Men: The Last Stand" was pursued by adversity and regarded with suspicion. Could it go toe-to-toe with the artfully crowd-pleasing "X2: X-Men United?" Now that director Bryan Singer had gone up, up and away to the forthcoming "Superman Returns," had the team lost its X-factor?

"You have no idea what is upon us now," says Dr. Charles Xavier (cerebral Patrick Stewart). Exactly. The pressure was on director Brett Ratner ("Rush Hour") to tie up the loose plot threads from "X2" and deliver 20th Century Fox from the wrath of anxious X-fans. That he did, by wisely leaving the material mostly alone.

While "X2" was a stylish, moody movie, "Last Stand" is a straightforward superhero smorgasbord, efficient and beefy if overly busy. It's fascinating how Simon Kinberg ("Mr. & Mrs. Smith") and Zak Penn ("Fantastic Four") have engineered an enhanced plot possessing the recombinant DNA of X-Men tales by Stan Lee, Chris Claremont, Grant Morrison and even Joss Whedon. The Danger Room, the Fastball Special and Dark Phoenix appear in the movie, as do a handful of fan favorite mutants, albeit in brief and different circumstances.

Fiery McKellen

"When the air is still and the night has fallen, there's only one question you must answer: Whom will you stand with," asks Magneto (fiery Ian McKellen). "Last Stand" follows the events of "X2." Students of the Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters go about their lives and Jean Grey (Famke Janssen) is still feared dead. Meanwhile, Magneto raises a mutant army when a cure for mutation is announced. Storm (Halle Berry) leads the X-Men in a bid to repel Magneto's rogue elements while Grey has mysteriously been resurrected, heralding an enigmatic new threat.

("X-Men: The Last Stand" opens May 24 in Metro Manila theaters.)



JACKMAN as Wolverine and Kelsey Grammer as Beast: Astonishing performances from extremes.

ENTERTAINMENT

A27

No 'Da Vinci' in SM malls

THE R-18 RATING GIVEN BY THE movie and Television Review and Classification Board to "The Da Vinci Code" means the movie will not be shown in SM mall cinemas, which has a standing ban on films with adult themes.

Ric Camallgan, first vice president of SM Leisure Inc., which operates SM Cinemas,

said the cinemaplex was standing by its own R-18 policy, even if "Da Vinci" is predicted to do well at the box office.

"If it's a hit, that's good for the distributor (Columbia Pictures)," Camallgan told Inquirer in a phone interview.

Filmmaker Mel Chionglo, a member of the cinema committee of the National

Commission for Culture and the Arts, suggested a compromise. He said Singapore, one of the strictest in Asia in terms of censorship laws, has an "R-A" rating.

"Restricted Artistic," Chionglo explained. "That was one of the proposed amendments to PD 1986 (the law governing the MTRCB) during the consultative hearing in

Congress last year."

Camallgan said that might not work for SM—producers and distributors might accuse the mall management of not being consistent. The mall banned R-18 films in 2004 because, he recalled, "they were not giving us sufficient revenue." Bayani San Diego Jr.



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G1	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 POSEIDON	4 THE DA VINCI CODE
G4	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 THE DA VINCI CODE 12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	
GB1	4 POSEIDON	5 OVER THE HEDGE	6 THE DA VINCI CODE	7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
GB3	1 THE DA VINCI CODE 1:10, 4:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THE DA VINCI CODE 1:40, 4:40, 11:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 THE DA VINCI CODE 1:40, 3:45, 6:50, 7:55, 10:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 OVER THE HEDGE 1:50, 3:45, 7:45, 9:30, 11:25 GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 THE DA VINCI CODE	4 OVER THE HEDGE
ACC	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 OVER THE HEDGE	4 POSEIDON
M2	1 THE DA VINCI CODE	2 POSEIDON	3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	4 THE DA VINCI CODE
	5 OVER THE HEDGE		5 OVER THE HEDGE	6 THE DA VINCI CODE

THE DA VINCI CODE 05.18.06

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MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

AYALA MALLS CINEMAS' THE DA VINCI CODE SCREENING SCHEDULE FOR MAY 19

GLORIETTA 4

Cinema 1** - 1:30 PM, 4:40, 11:00
Cinema 2 - 11:30 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:50, 9:00
Cinema 3* - 12:30 PM, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 6 - 12:00 NN, 3:10, 5:20, 9:30
Cinema 6 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 2:40 PM, 5:50, 9:00
Cinema 2 - 12:10 PM, 3:20 PM, 6:30, 9:40

GREENBELT 1

Cinema 2 - 12:00 NN, 3:10 PM, 6:20, 9:30
Onstage - 2:10 PM, 5:20, 8:30

* THX & Guaranteed Seat Cinema
** Digital Sound & Guaranteed Seat Cinema

Screening schedules are subject to change without prior notice

GREENBELT 3

Cinema 1* - 1:10 PM, 4:20
Cinema 2* - 1:40 PM, 4:50, 11:10
Cinema 5* - 2:10 PM, 5:20, 8:40, 12:00

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

Cinema 1 (THX) - 12:30 PM, 3:40 PM, 6:50, 10:00
Cinema 2 - 1:00 PM, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30
Cinema 3 - 1:30 PM, 4:40, 7:50, 11:00

MARKET! MARKET!

Cinema 1 - 1:45 AM, 2:55, 6:05, 7:20, 9:15
Cinema 5 - 12:15 PM, 3:25, 6:35, 9:45

AYALA CENTER CEBU

Cinema 1 - 12:30 PM, 3:10, 6:30
Cinema 2 - 12:00 NN, 2:40, 5:40, 9:00

Customer Service Text Hotline: 0917 6095900

Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm

Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn

Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm

Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA

AYALA CENTER CEBU

MARKET! MARKET!

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Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm

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GLORIETTA

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MARKET! MARKET!

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Activity Center
Alabang Town Center
May 20, 6pm (Saturday)
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Glorietta Activity Center
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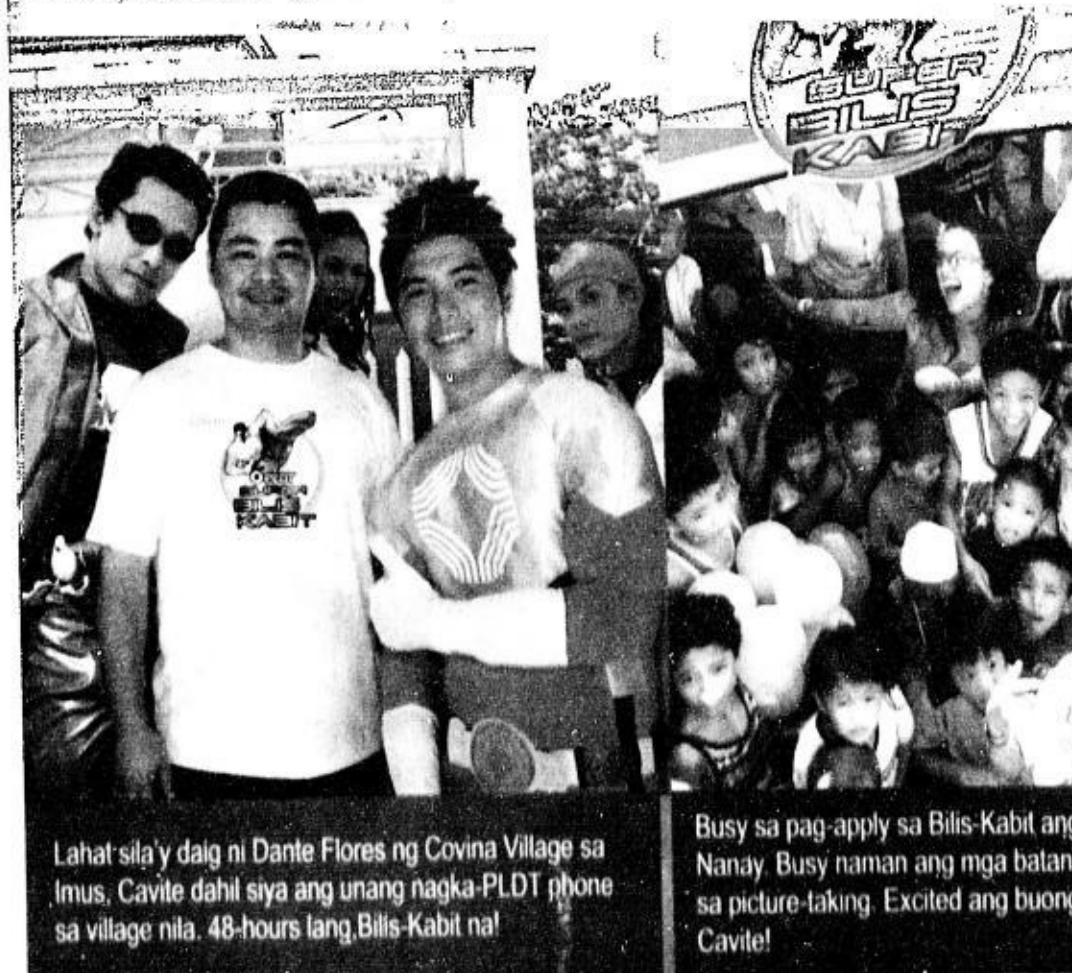
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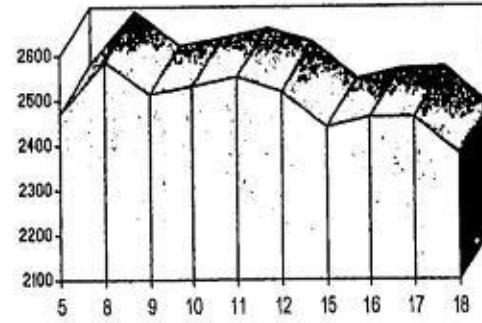
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NISSAN

Stocks post biggest single-day loss in 5 years

Heavy losses on Wall Street spark selling spree



SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.44-PERCENT LOWER YESTERDAY, falling sharply in line with the region after the latest US inflation scare sparked heavy losses on Wall Street overnight, dealers said.

They said the markets have been very volatile over the past several days as opinion on the outlook for US interest rates has veered dramatically with ev-

ery bit of fresh data. At the same time, stocks have made sustained gains in recent months, taking the bourse to near seven-year highs

to give investors plenty of room for profit-taking.

Volume was 3.74 billion shares worth P2.39 billion.

Declines led gains 106 to 9, with 30 stocks unchanged.

"It's a knee-jerk reaction to Wall Street's disappointing performance," said James Lago of Westlink Global Eq-

STOCKS/B3

Peso weakens to 52.595 to \$1

By Doris C. Dumla

THE PESO YESTERDAY WEAKENED TO A new four-month low of 52.595 against the dollar, spooked by prospects of further interest rate increases by the US Federal Reserve, currency dealers said.

The local currency shed 53.50 centavos from Wednesday's closing of 52.06 at the Philippine Dealing System. It slid throughout the day after opening at an intra-day high of 52.25:\$1 as foreign exchange inflows failed to cope with intensified corporate demand.

Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust Commercial Bank, said: "There was really pent-up demand for the US dollars and there's not enough supply."

"The CPI (consumer price index) report which came out in the US was quite scary. It might signal further upward movement in short-term interest rates by the US Fed," Avante said.

It was earlier expected that the monetary tightening in the world's largest economy was at its tailend.

Avante added that many currency traders were short on dollars since the last two months of 2005 when the peso was sharply gaining and were thus prompted to cover these positions now by buying dollars.

Demand from oil companies was likewise boosting corporate demand for dollars, he said.

Over the last few days, the peso had been battered by strong demand for dollars ahead of the import season in the third quarter. At the same time, inflows from overseas Filipino workers had poured in much earlier than the usual April-May influx, traders said.

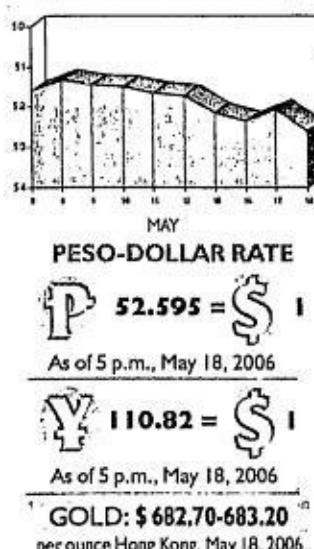
Strong OFW remittances, improved confidence in the government's fiscal reforms and dissipating political noise jacked the peso up from the 54 levels last year, ending 2005 at 53.09 against the dollar.

Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said the peso was being supported by strong portfolio flows into the capital markets and expectations of a possible sovereign credit upgrade as early as the fourth quarter or early 2007.

He projected that the peso would trade between a high of 50.50 and a low of 54 against the US dollar, averaging at 53.50 and settling at 53:\$1 by year's end.

Ravelas said he expected the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to tighten its overnight rates further this year, after raising key overnight policy rates by a total of 75 basis points and hiking the reserve requirement by 2 percentage points last year.

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

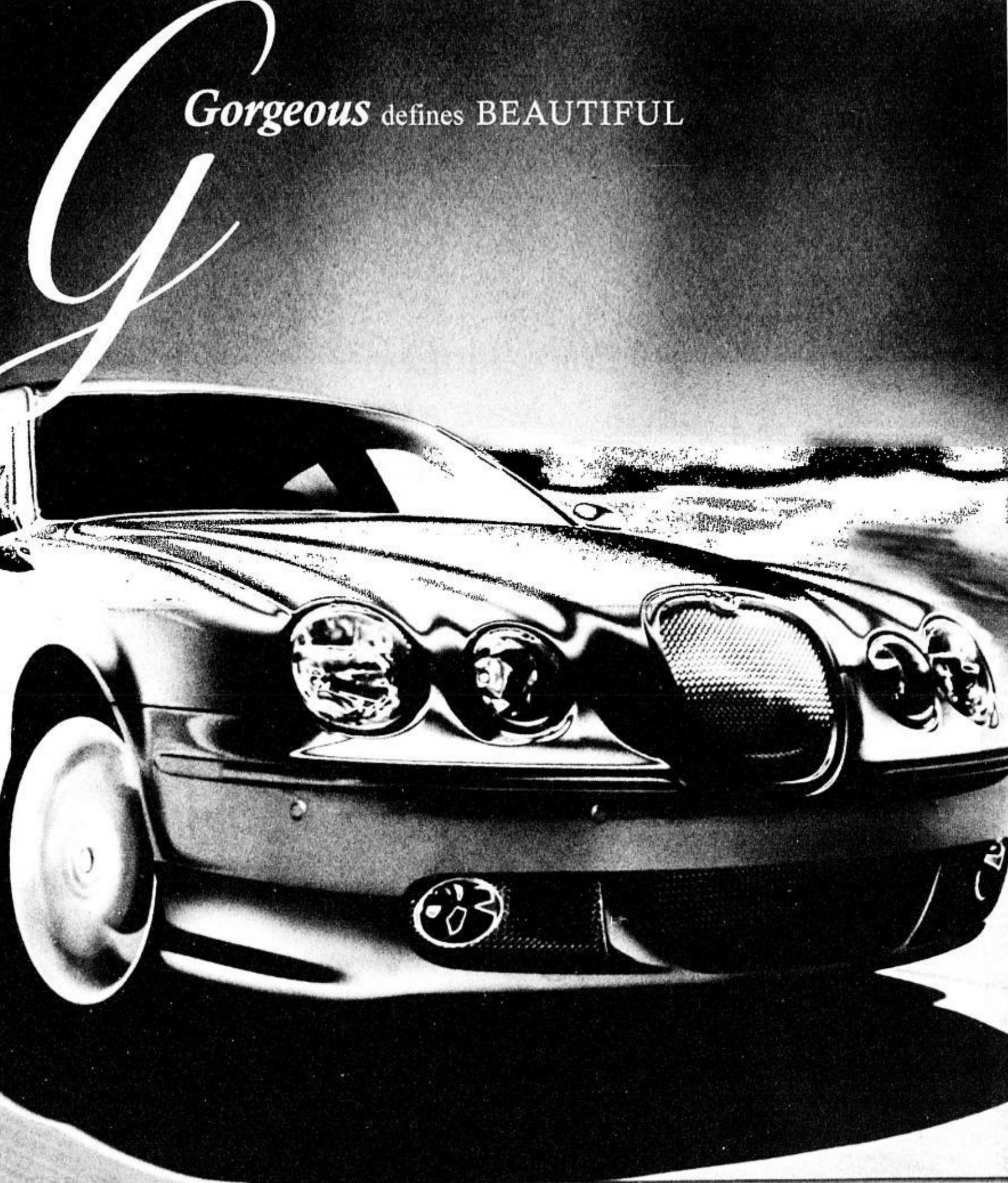


WHAT'S INSIDE

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NDC to float 7-year peso bonds to raise P10B

By Doris C. Dumla

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORP. WILL issue P10 billion in long-term peso bonds this month or next month to boost the government's infrastructure spending, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said yesterday.

Neri told reporters that proceeds from the bond float, the first tranche of a P20-billion planned issuance for this year, would be used to augment funds for irrigation. He said the bonds would carry a maturity of at least seven years.

He said the government was hoping to increase its infrastructure spending by 55 percent this year.

Neri said proceeds of the float would help the government in its pump-priming efforts.

He noted that the delay in the enactment of the 2006 budget, for instance, could infringe on the country's economic growth performance.

Gov't planning to use funds for infrastructure projects

"It could have an impact because the government will not be spending as much as we'd like to," Neri said.

However, he said the Senate had committed to pass the budget bill this week and elevate the appropriations act to the bicameral conference committee next week.

The government plans to spend an additional P35 billion to boost the economy this year. The funds will come from P20 billion worth of savings in the 2005 budget, local government funds and the NDC bond float, Malacañang earlier said.

Among the projects to be funded are roads and irrigation works that would make available two million hectares of land for agriculture.

In a recent study, the World Bank

warned that infrastructure development in the Philippines was lagging behind population growth and rapid urbanization, creating bottlenecks that could harm the country's competitiveness and poverty reduction efforts.

WB country director Joachim von Amsberg cited findings from the bank's new report "Philippines: Meeting Infrastructure Challenges" and urged the government to take advantage of its fiscal progress to beef up infrastructure spending.

The study indicated that critical reforms spearheaded by the government to promote private sector participation and power sector restructuring were among the most progressive in Asia. However, progress in infrastructure has

not kept up with population explosion and urbanization, drawing concern that growth and poverty reduction targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, may be at risk.

Over the next few years, Von Amsberg said the Philippines would need to gradually shore up infrastructure investments from less than 3 percent to at least 5 percent of gross domestic product, the average spending level needed for East Asia middle-income countries.

He said improved efficiency of infrastructure spending in the Philippines would ease infrastructure bottlenecks.

Von Amsberg said: "The Philippines' ongoing fiscal turnaround and strong revenue collection in recent months can set in motion a virtuous circle of improved public finances, better public services and growth, more employment and jobs, and more rapid social progress and poverty reduction."

Proposed Lafayette test run backed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LAFAYETTE (PHILIPPINES) INC., WHOSE mining operations in Albay was shutdown last year after tailings spilled and contaminated water resources in the area, should be given another chance to prove that it had done well in addressing the problem, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

CMP president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez yesterday urged the government to allow Lafayette's Rapu-Rapu project to restart operations but under probation.

"This is only until such time that Lafayette has shown that it had complied with all the requirements and recommendations that the government may (demand), whatever these may be," Romualdez said.

In a prepared statement, CMP announced that an independent team of mining experts commissioned in November to look into the mine spills found that Lafayette "has substantially complied with the recommended requirements and standards in preparation for the necessary test-run."

The test-run would be done as soon as the Pollution Adjudication Board issues a temporary lifting of the cease and desist order on the Rapu-Rapu project.

CMP said the probe team's findings highlighted the importance of monitoring closely the firm's operations to ensure that capacity usage would increase progressively.

Bancommerce to help set up bank in Africa

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF Equatorial Guinea announced that it had entered into a partnership with the Philippines' Bank of Commerce (Bancommerce) to set up the national bank in that oil-producing nation in Central Africa.

The African bank, to be named Banco Nacional de Guinea Equatorial (Bange) has the Equatorial Guinean government as its main stockholder with a 45-percent interest. Bancommerce took up 30 percent of the capital.

In a statement, Bancommerce said it saw opportunities and potential in Bange, especially in the area of servicing overseas Filipino workers in that region. There are foreign-owned oil refineries operating in that country employing Filipino workers.

Equatorial Guinea Minister of Finance and Budget Marcelino Owono Edu, in an official statement, said the bank would have an initial capital of 3 million euros. Private corporations and individual investors in Guinea have taken up 25 percent of the equity.

During a meeting of the Parliament of equatorial Guinea, Edu said Bancommerce, aside from being an equity partner in the bank, was also engaged as a technical adviser of the bank.

Last year, 11 citizens from Equatorial Guinea underwent a comprehensive training program in different areas of banking at the Bancommerce head office in Makati.

Bancommerce's participation in this venture was authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Release of P540M to employees of Napocor OKd

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF NEGOTIATIONS, the Office of the Solicitor General has finally allowed the management of National Power Corp. to release some P540 million in employee step increments that had been placed in escrow.

The release of the funds, however, is subject to three conditions, Solicitor General Antonio Eduardo Nachura told Napocor president Cyril del Callar in a letter.

The first condition is that the amount to be released should be the full and final settlement of the step increment claims of the Napocor Employees Consolidated Union (Necu) and all other concerned employees.

Another condition is that the release of the P540 million "should constitute a waiver of all allied claims by the Necu and all concerned employees for the payment of step increments."

The last is that the amount should be paid directly to concerned Napocor employees.

Step increments are basic salary adjustments given to employees every so many years of satisfactory service in the public sector.

The funds placed in escrow involved the amount of salary adjustments claimed by Napocor employees when the state firm was reorganized in 2003.

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LIC at EPCIB

THE MEDIA BATTLE MAY HAVE quieted down, but a low-intensity conflict is still being waged at Equitable PCIB preparatory for next week's stockholders' meeting.

A proxy campaign is underway between the camps of vice chairs Teresita Sy and Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, with both groups seeking to add more board seats for each of them in Tuesday's election.

In addition to the SM Group's present five-member representation in the board, Sy has nominated her brother Harley, former Trade Undersecretary Gregory Domingo, SM Investments chief finance officer Jose Sio, and Highlands Prime president Antonio Henson to join her in the 15-member bank board.

Romualdez, despite his 8-per-

cent shareholdings not being enough to obtain a second board seat, nevertheless nominated his brother, Benguet Corp. president Benjamin Philip, and two Romualdez lawyers for the Tuesday meeting.

According to the grapevine, the SM Group is also supporting the nomination of retired Bangko Sentral Governor Alberto Reyes for independent director, to dislodge incumbent Anthony Te, who is said to be a Romualdez ally.

Despite their boardroom differences, Sy and Romualdez seem to project an amiability toward each other in public, especially when among the bank staff. According to the grapevine, the SM heiress and Romualdez even took together a recent Asian Spir-

COCKTAILS



Victor C.
Agustin

it flight to Baguio City to attend the bank's planning conference.

Unable to land because of low-hanging clouds, the flight had to turn back to Manila, where the two hired a Lucio Tan helicopter and promptly flew back to the City of Pines, this time as seatmates.

Burlesk apology

HOUSE Majority Leader Prospero Nograles is walking tall these days, after the tabloid Abante and

its sister Abante Tonite offered an unequivocal apology to the Davao City congressman over the tabloids' "Burlesk King" stories.

The tabloids went to town to claim that a naked Nograles had been caught on video with an ABS-CBN host in a five-star hotel in Manila by no less than the policeman-husband of the TV personality.

The two Tagalog tabloids, owned by Malaya publisher Jake Macasaet, later on admitted that no such video footage exists.

Apologizing to the respective families, the tabloids on Wednesday added that the Davao City congressman and the broadcaster

were not lovers after all, as had been broadly insinuated by the series.

As a result of the embarrassing stories, the broadcaster had to leave ABS-CBN under a cloud of doubt.

Money-go-round

• RENATO Corona will turn just 58 this October, but already the Supreme Court justice had to be transported out of the Guam airport terminal in a wheel chair during a visit to the island earlier this week.

• A TOP San Miguel Corp. official has commissioned one of his crisis PR agents to plant negative

column items against SGV, blaming the audit firm and its foreign partner, Ernst and Young, for allegedly having botched San Miguel's hybrid bond issue.

Heard through the grapevine

ONE society magazine editor instantly and correctly guessed that Inno Sotto was the courrier referred to in Monday's item as owing his landlord two years of back rent for his apartment-atelier in Malate. Apparently, Sotto's financial predicament is quite known among the industry players.

(Email: cocktails_pdi@pltdsl.net or cocktails_pdi@yahoo.com)

Stocks post biggest single-day loss in 5 years

From page B1

ties Inc.

Wall Street shares took a dive Wednesday after a hotter-than-expected report on US inflation ignited investor jitters about higher interest rates.

American stocks wiped out \$64 billion in market value from the 30 companies that make up the Dow industrial average index, giving the blue-chip average its biggest one-day point drop in three years.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled 160.25 points (1.4 percent) to 11,259.64 while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite slumped 29.59 points (1.33 percent) to 2,199.54.

The broad-market Standard and Poor's 500 index retreated 16.98 points (1.31 percent) to 1,275.10.

Ahead of the market opening, the Labor Department reported that consumer prices increased a larger-than-expected 0.6 percent in April, led by higher energy prices. The core consumer price index (CPI), which excludes food and energy, increased 0.3 percent, also slightly higher than expected.

"The CPI numbers seemed to have really shaken up people," said John Forelli, senior vice president and portfolio manager at Independence Investments. "The fear is that inflation may have reigned and that the Fed is going to have to keep raising rates longer than they expected."

Significantly, the data showed core inflation is now at the top end of the Fed's comfort zone of a 2-percent annual pace. The central bank has raised short-term interest rates 16 times in a row over the past two years in a bid to choke off inflationary pressures in the economy. AFP

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Balanced Fund	1.200090	1.196966
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*According to the study entitled "Philippines UPS Markets" published by Frost & Sullivan, the global Growth Consulting company, APC was the leading UPS supplier in the less than 1 kVA range in 2005.

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BUSINESS *Friday*

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Market research helps build brands

Benefits of knowing market well outweigh cost of conducting study

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

NOT MANY FIRMS APPRECIATE the value of applied market research in selling and building brands. Many believe that it is an expensive exercise, and merely tells them what they already know.

In many cases, the research outcome may not be satisfying, due largely to gaps in the preparation of the market research brief.

The quality of the research depends largely on how well the research briefing was conducted and how the discussions and agreements before the actual research progressed.

The old adage "garbage in, garbage out" largely applies in this case.

What makes a research brief?

At least seven critical elements must be present in any research brief.

These are the research background, research objectives, respondent profile or potential target market, methodology, sample size, timing and budget.

The details of the brief may vary depending on the discussion between the research agency and the client.

At the onset, the marketer must be clear on the use of a particular research methodology and the expected results.

Research background. Provides an overview of the company

and/or brand and the scenario leading to the need to conduct research.

Research objectives. Define and list the reasons for conducting research. Likewise, define the learning parameters and what the marketer expects to know from the entire research process.

Respondent profile. Describes the potential target market and/or respondent group. This includes the demographic, socioeconomic and psychographic information, if available.

Research methodology. Describes the preferred methodology for mining insights. The initial research brief may define the preferred method; nonetheless, in a discussion between the marketer and agency, the methodology may be retained or changed.

Sample size. This refers to the number of people, called respondents, who will be part of the research process. The actual number depends on the type of research that will be mounted i.e. whether qualitative or quantitative.

Qualitative tests require less number of respondents while quantitative tests must have a minimum number of respondents statistically acceptable to represent the universe being studied.

Timetable. The timetable defines when the client expects to get the results of the study. The agency and the client agree to a timetable that works backwards from the first presentation date.

Budget. The client provides the

agency with his budget. This may change depending on the outcome of the discussion of the research method and process.

How does research build brands?

Applied consumer market research is one of the most effective ways of steering a brand to a certain direction.

There are different forms of consumer market research. Some of the more effective and commonly used methods include the focus group discussion (FGD); usage, attitude, image survey (UAI); product placement test; advertising pre-test, retail audit and the customer satisfaction survey.

Focus group discussion. The focus group discussion is a qualitative study that allows deep mining of insights from a representative potential target market. Each FGD can have anywhere from six to eight participants.

While not statistically acceptable and data needs to be further validated by quantitative research nevertheless, the results of the FGDs are often used to set the direction of the brand.

Depending on the respondent profile and details of the research study, FGDs may cost anywhere from P60,000 to P120,000 per group.

Usage, attitude, image survey. This type of quantitative survey makes use of a highly structured questionnaire that helps determine the level of consumption of a brand and its competition.

Likewise, the outcome of the research also determines the consumers' attitude, likability, perceptions and associations around the brand and its competition. The results of the research help determine the brand's most favorable and strong associations that can be otherwise visual or copy related and may be sustained in present and future communications materials.

The geographic scope of the UAI and sample has implications on the final cost of the study. It may range from a low of P350,000 to over a million pesos.

Product placement test. This type of research test can be done



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

through an initial small sample and then developed into a full blown quantitative research. The objective is to gauge the target market's acceptance of a product or its derivative, determine how the product is actually used by consumers, appeal of the product as well as areas for improvement.

Depending on the sample, profile and objectives of the product placement test, costs can range from a low of P60,000 to P350,000.

Advertising pre-test. This type of quantitative research test is mounted before any commercial airing of a brand campaign. Due to the high cost of advertising, it is often wise for brands using television as a major medium to have their advertising campaign tested before nationwide airing.

Reputable market research agencies have their own proprietary versions of the advertising pre-test. Nonetheless, the objectives for testing remain the same for all. These include determining the ability of the ad to rise above the media clutter or the advertising material's level of intrusiveness; ability to communicate the brand's value proposition, product, freight/window and brand personality; ability of the ad to effectively motivate the target market to buy the brand.

Most creative ads engage the

viewer. Unfortunately, a good number stop at this stage and fail to move the buyer to buy the product.

The advertising pre-test is a very efficient tool in determining whether a brand's advertising is simply engaging or is truly highly effective in persuading the target market to buy the brand. Pretests can cost from a low of P180,000 to a high of P450,000 depending on the sample.

Retail audit. This is an efficient way of determining what products fly off the store shelves, and how fast. While gross sales are usually the norm of many firms in assessing the performance of the brand, consumer off-take nonetheless provides a more accurate description of the brand's performance in the market.

Depending on a company's incentives to the trade, sales loading can happen where retail outlets turn in volume purchase orders. Nonetheless, these orders can be sitting in the warehouse or in store shelves.

On the other hand, a retail audit provides an accurate picture of the market's acceptance of a brand as the data reveals consumer movement from the store shelves.

Information that can be derived from retail audits include which SKU variant or size is invariably being bought heavily; how many units are being moved

out per store, per geographic area, etc. in a certain period; how is the category and its brands performing, etc.

Retail audit costs vary based on the recency of the data and the category. This can range from P350,000 to as much as P650,000.

Customer satisfaction survey. This survey provides an effective way to measure the level of satisfaction the consumer has when using the brand. Is the target market truly elated when using the brand, will he or she recommend the use of the brand, what did the consumer like or not like about the brand, etc.

Learning from this research tool can help the marketer institutionalize the consumer offer and process and improve on any down sides.

The costs of research can be substantial, indeed. But this is small compared to the cost of a disastrous strategy or wrong brand direction.

One must also recognize that it is the client's expert use of research that will ultimately help build his brand.

(The author is a professor of Marketing and Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional Schools Graduate School of Business and is chief brand strategist of Marketing Knowledge Series Training and Consultancy with email at kdeasis@skynet.net or www.karendeasis.com.)

GOINGS-ON

DOT sets bigger business mission to Japan

THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM IS SENDING A BIGGER DELEGATION FOR its business mission to Japan this month, the second since last year.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano said the 2nd Philippine Business Mission (PBM) would be composed of 85 delegates representing a wider field of interests to enhance the mission's chances of attracting more Japanese tourists and investments.

"They will have pre-arranged meetings with executives and owners of reputable Japanese firms in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka for investments, marketing tie-ups, joint ventures, and sales and supply contracts. A dedicated one-day tourism business exchange between Philippine suppliers and Japanese buyers will be held in Osaka on May 22, Nagoya on May 24 and Tokyo on May 26," Durano said.

With Philippine Airlines as a major sponsor, the 2nd PBM involves airlines and cruise ships, local governments (provincial, city and municipal), resorts and spas, travel agencies and tour operators, hotels and restaurants, health and wellness establishments, wholesale and retail shops, and beach and mountain destinations.

"Designed to firm up last year's agreements, the 2nd PBM will also open and initiate new ones, especially on investments in tourism facilities that will increase our current 10,000 room capacity, which is just enough to accommodate our target foreign arrivals of three million this year," Durano added.

The 2nd PBM, according to Durano, must also help ensure that this year's target of hitting 3 million foreign visitors will be attained. He said last year's PBM helped push the country's foreign arrivals for the full-year 2005 to 2.6 million, which even topped 2004's record of 2.29 million, with Japan as a major source of tourists.

This year's event is more significant as it marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan since the ratification of the Peace Treaty and Reparations Agreement on July 23, 1956.

Since then, Japan has evolved to become the Philippines' second largest investor, trading partner and source of tourists, and largest donor of official development assistance.

Durano said the 2nd PBM would also reinforce the now well-established Premium Resort Islands Philippines brand in Japan, support the new sub-campaign "Philippines: Wellness from the Inside Out," push Filipino exports, and promote the country's destinations to the 17-million Japanese outbound market.

Through the 2nd PBM, members of the local tourism industry will gain bilateral government assistance in finding Japanese buyers of travel packages, investors in new projects, and partners for joint ventures or asset acquisitions, and other business linkages.

Japan is projected to account for over a million, or more than 20 percent, of the country's five million target arrivals by 2010.

Learn candle- and soap-making

AROMATIC candles are ideal for souvenirs and gifts because of their soothing and relaxing effect. Learn how to make them and earn extra cash in the process.

In line with the government's objective to give livelihood to those who want to earn extra income, the Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on Aroma Candle-Making at the Veronique Blooms Unlimited No. 9 Anonas Rd., Proj. 3, Quezon City on May 21, Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials, different costing methods and formula in candle-making. Students will be given hands-on experience on how to make decorative aroma candles, twisted candles, gel candles with pellets type paraffin wax, candle in glass container, etc.

On May 27, Saturday, the Golden Treasure Skills Development Program will conduct a one-day seminar on soap-making to be held at the UPAAP Aluñni Center, Magsaysay Avenue, Yilan St., University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials and costing. Students will learn how to make liquid dishwashing soap, liquid hand soap, liquid all purpose soap, bar detergent soap, herbal bath soap (papaya, kalamansi, cucumber, oatmeal etc.) powder soap, fabric softener, car shampoo, bonus courses are liquid bleach, tile and bowl cleaner and how to process virgin coconut oil for soap. Participants will receive a certificate right after the seminar. All materials will be provided. For questions, call 952-40-28, 952-29-34, 951-29-66, 436-78-26 and 913-65-51.

Q: We attended a seminar where one of the speakers told us that price-driven promotions can damage brand equity. If this is true, why are so many companies doing it?

Then, when we echoed the seminar at the office and mentioned this warning, our general manager disagreed.

He cited the case of the leading consumer companies, like P&G, Unilever and Colgate-Palmolive, that are still into price-based promos.

He asked: "Do you see the brand equity of Ariel, Safeguard, Sunsilk, or Palmolive Shampoo suffering?"

So, what's the real score on the effect of price-driven promos on brand equity?

A: If we source "the real score" from the available published studies on this issue, we will find different answers.

Some studies showed that a quick fix price-based promo adversely affected brand equity. But just as many studies showed no such adverse effect.

To answer your two questions, we'll source from both theory and practice.

Then, it's up to you to choose which logic seems more applicable in your particular case and situation.

Your first question: "Is it true that price driven promos damage brand equity?"

What are price driven, price-based promotions in the first place? And how does this differ from a product-based promo?

Promo advocates tell us that a "price-off" and a coupon are price-based consumer promos.

On the other hand, a bonus pack and a product sample are product-based consumer promos. You see examples of these promos in the supermarkets every day.

Many practitioners would of course argue that a bonus pack or a product sample effectively functions like a price-off or a coupon. They are "indirect" price-based promos. In trade promotion, a trade discount is a price-based trade promo while a free good (as in a "10-plus-1" deal, that is, a "10 cases bought, 1 case free"

deal) is a product-based trade promo.

Again, many would argue that a "10-plus-1 free good deal" is effectively or "indirectly" a 10 percent discount and therefore a price-based promo.

So as you can see, here's one reason why there's a continuing, raging unsettled debate about sales promotion.

There isn't even an agreement among practitioners about basic terms like what's a price-based versus a product-based promo.

If you trace the origin of the debate, you'll find that it's the ad agency people who were critical of the promo and its effect on brand equity.

The claim is that advertising builds brand values.

However, because promos are quick ways to induce brand switching, repeat purchase, or getting consumers to buy now or buy more, they often do so at the expense of brand image.

But what do studies show? Here are some of these studies' more insightful and helpful results.

Your category determines the risk

First, you have to consider the product category where your brand belongs.

If your brand is a consumer durable (say, a household appliance or a car), there's not much risk of its brand equity getting hurt by, for example, a sale price promo.

At the end of almost every year, when the next year's model is announced, leading car brands go on a sale price promo.

And that's been going on for years. But we understand that Honda's and Toyota's brand

equity remain intact.

Next, consider the price segment your brand is in.

If it's in a premium segment and you get tempted and yield to the temptation to promote based on price, then something could happen.

One could think: "How can this brand of mine go down close to the price of an economy brand without sacrificing quality? It must now be lower in quality on some of the attributes. That's not my premium brand anymore."

In such a case, the price promotion erodes the premium brand's equity and image.

Then there are those who think that high-quality brands rarely go for promotions, thus, if a premium brand does go on a promotion, then its quality must have been compromised.

Third, you need to also consider your brand's competitive status and earned brand equity.

If your brand is a strong market leader with just as strong brand equity, it's going to be less vulnerable to threats to its equity value.

Take Clusivol, for example.

This brand is a strong leader brand in the premium vitamin segment (but not the total vitamin market).

It also has an established vitamin brand equity and value. When it went for price promotions, these did little or no damage to its brand equity.

The more recent cases here involve Jollibee and McDonald's.

Both are leading brands have been and are into one promo after another. There's no solid evidence that these promos hurt these brands' equity values.

We're out of space! We'll answer your second question on why companies still do price promos that are most likely to do damage to their brand equity next week.

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@pldtDSL.net or text us at 0919-314-5412. God bless!

Migrants find Baguio vendor-friendly, study says

Cool weather, warm people a potent combination

BAGUIO CITY—THE PROLIFERATION of migrant vendors in this mountain resort city can be attributed to the weather and the people's friendliness to vendors, a study by a Malaysian anthropology professor showed.

The study, which was presented in an hour-long video documentary entitled "Sidewalk Capitalism: Being a Street Vendor in Baguio City," was a product of a six-month research by Dr. Daniel Yeoh, a senior fellow of the Asian Public Intellectuals.

"Aside from the cool weather, migrant vendors come here because it is a tourist area. From those I have interviewed from Mindanao who experienced pain and suffering, they come here [and work as] vendors because they saw that the city government was more tolerant of street vendors," Yeoh, an anthropology professor at the Monash University in Malaysia, said in the study presented at the University of the Philippines Baguio early this week.

Yeoh said the study aimed to get the street vendors' view on life based on their actual experience.

Gafur Gunting, vice president of the Muslim Traders Association here, said the economic crisis in Mindanao had pushed most of them to go to Baguio and other provinces in Luzon and earn a living as street vendors.

The study said 3,000 of the city's 260,000 residents are migrant vendors from Pangasinan, Mindanao and Cordillera provinces.

It said migrant vendors have also formed their own associations to protect their welfare.

Yeoh said migrant vendors have either reached college or have earned their degrees. This, he said, only proved that even educated people venture into the underground economy because there are no available jobs after they finish college.

Yeoh said of the 60 street vendors whom he interviewed, he only chose 20 respondents for the actual documentary.

"These vendors are not exactly poor people but people with financial



BAGUIO does not attract just tourists, but entrepreneurs as well.

difficulty. There are those who reached college but also engaged in vending because they had no means to support their education," he said.

The respondents said the city government's anti-demolition teams destroy their wares whenever the local anti-peddling law is implemented.

They said those caught are fined P1,000 and their products confiscated.

Zenaida Pingkawet, a fruit vendor who was interviewed in the study, said she suffered from miscarriage after policemen chased her.

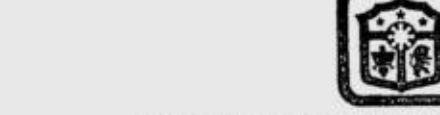
"The police chased us and even beat us. I could not remember how many times I was punched because I was more concerned about how I was

going to protect the fruits that I had to sell," she said.

"Because of the constant chasing, many women vendors suffered premature delivery," said Geraldine Cache, former chair of Ormuz-Kadamy, a Baguio-based urban poor group.

Emmanuel Reyes, city public order service officer, said their teams had faced resistance from vendors, some of whom would stab their personnel.

"The vendors insist that it is their livelihood. I understand them, but there is a law. I understand that it's poverty which [drives them] to go to the streets and I think the national government should do something about it," he said. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



Philippine National Bank

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 30, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 24, 2005
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2005
5. Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment to the Amended By-Laws (transfer of the position, powers and duties of the Chairman of the Board in Sections 6.1 and 6.3, Article VI captioned "Officers" to Section 5.4, Article V captioned "Board of Directors")
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

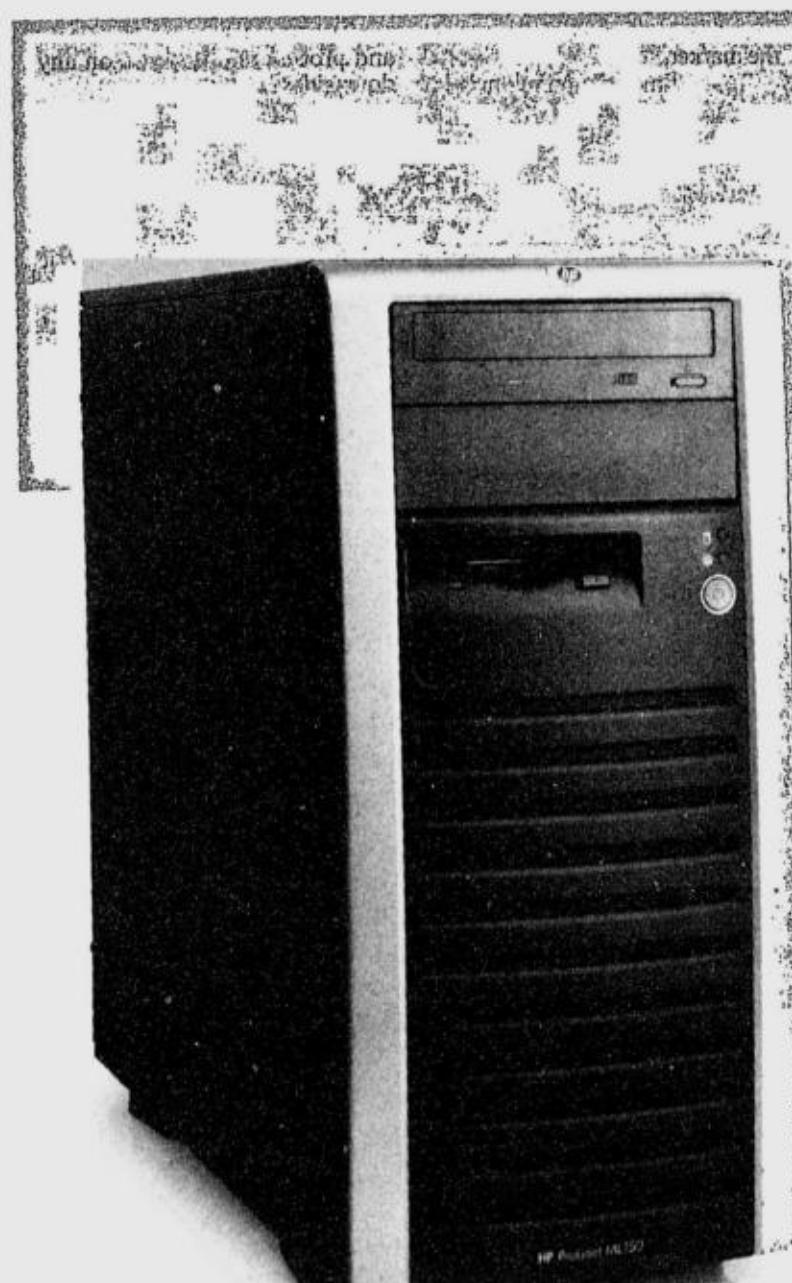
Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2005 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 will be entitled to notice and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 25, 2006. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 26, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 24, 2006


RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary



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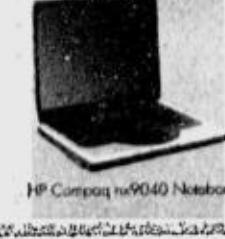
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3. Once we have validated the information, your email will serve as your entry for the raffle.
4. All purchases for consideration in the raffle must be received by Stratworks by July 15, 2006.
5. Raffle draw shall be held at Stratworks, Inc. on July 30, 2006 in the presence of an HP representative.
6. Prizes are not convertible to cash.
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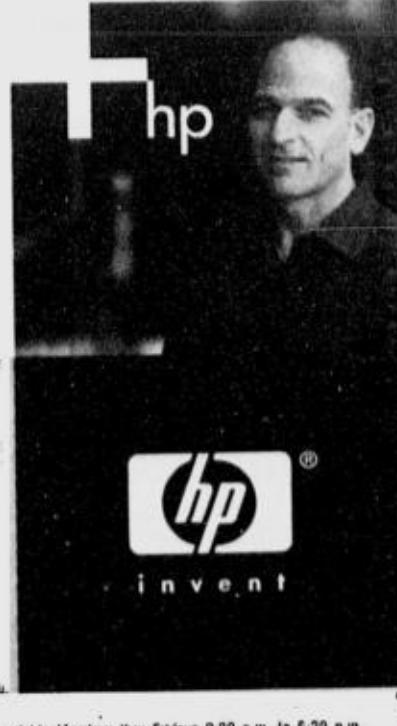


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Forgetting the small farmer

By Ernesto M. Ordonez

"FORGET US NOT." THIS MAY WELL BE THE battle cry of the Alyansa Agrikultura, the largest farmer-fishermen coalition today. Since its founding on Jan. 21, 2003, it has fully supported the Department of Agriculture's efforts in trying to get the P33-billion annual budget legally mandated by the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (Afma). Unfortunately, the DA has been getting less than P16 billion a year.

The Alyansa also backed the DA in opposing a non-level global playing field through less rapid liberalization. This is because developed countries have not meaningfully decreased their massive agricultural subsidies, while requiring developing countries with minimal subsidies like ours to immediately implement sudden and deep tariff reductions.

Last May 16, the Legislative and Executive Development Advisory Council met to discuss 11 priority measures up for discussion in the 17 session days remaining before Congress takes a break in June.

COMMENTARY

Sen. Richard Gordon said, "I think realistically, maybe about four measures should be passed." We hope the small farmer is not forgotten by ignoring the biofuels bill.

Biofuels bill

Last November 2005, the House of Representatives approved the Biofuels Act of 2005, mandating the use of bioethanol or ethyl alcohol as transport fuel. If this measure is given priority, principal author Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said: "We will boost employment in the countryside to 300,000 new farm workers and an estimated 10,000 ethanol plant employees spread across the nation."

Other benefits are foreign exchange savings of \$825 million over a 10-year period; a guaranteed demand of an average of 300 million liters of ethanol annually, and, because it is a clean fuel, billions of pesos in savings from medical costs and lost income caused by air pollution.

The table above shows our dangerous 96-percent dependence on imported oil.

Our net oil imports are increasing. Since these are mostly fossil fuels that are not renewable, supply will increasingly get scarcer with the consequent further skyrocketing of prices.

With our own manufactured biofuels, we can have oil security in addition to food security. We have more than enough means to produce the necessary raw materials for alternative fuels: 2.4 million hectares of corn, 3.5 million hectares of coconut, 390,000 hectares of sugar cane and 330,000 hectares of cassava and camote. This will mean added income to our farmers.

Improvements needed

However, an amendment is needed so that the small farmer is not forgotten. In the bill's current version, there is a National Biofuels Board that will supervise the implementation of the biofuel national strategy. Of the 13 board members, four are from the private sec-

PHILIPPINE ENERGY SUPPLY MIX (In Million Barrels of Fuel Equivalent)			
	Local Production	Net Imports	Total
2003	4.72	81.42	86.14
Oil Products		15.14	15.14
2004	4.72	78.01	82.73
Oil Products		28.49	28.49

tor. They are "from the feed stock producers for bioethanol, distillery industry, petroleum industry, and automobile manufacturers." Not one comes from the farmer sector, which provides the necessary raw materials. It is imperative that farmer interests and insights be represented in this board.

We must also institute a paradigm in our

current development strategy. Today, we give our farmers little support, as indicated

by the DA budget being less than half of what Afma mandates. We hit our farmers with a double whammy by "out liberalizing" even the WTO. Whereas the WTO allows an average maximum agricultural tariff of 35 percent, we insist on exposing our farmers to unfair competition with a very low applied 8 percent tariff.

This contrasts with Thailand's very successful agriculture policy. They give their farmers a much larger agriculture budget. In addition, with the same WTO maximum tariff of 35 percent, they apply a much higher 29 percent agricultural tariff rate.

Other recommendations

To ensure our biofuel future does not encounter the same sad fate as our agriculture, we must provide a tariff regime that will sufficiently protect our new biofuel industry. More importantly, we should provide the farmers with the budget and support services necessary to be globally competitive. Otherwise, we will be importing our raw materials. Our 300,000 farm jobs will be lost. Even our processing jobs may be lost because of decreased global competitiveness resulting from no assured local supply.

The private sector can also initiate its own improvements. For example, creative profit sharing mechanisms can be institutionalized in the form of projects such as small lending schemes and outright grants.

If the small farmer is not forgotten by Congress in the next few days by hopefully passing the biofuels bill, and if the farmer is acknowledged by the government and the private sector as not only a raw material supplier, but also a key partner in building the industry, then biofuels will indeed have a bright future.

(The author is Agriwatch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635)

PSE reports 61.3% rise in net foreign buying

Solid proof of investors' confidence in the economy

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

NET FOREIGN BUYING IN THE stock market from January to April soared 61.3 percent to P19.5 billion from P12.09 billion a year ago as investor sentiment on the country's economic and political prospects improved, the Philippine Stock Exchange said yesterday.

Net foreign buying is the difference between total foreign buying and selling.

The PSE also said total foreign buying during the four-month period rose 17.9 to P109.72 billion from year ago's P93.09 billion, outpacing the 11.4-percent increase in foreign selling to P90.23 billion from P81 billion last year.

Francis Lim, PSE president and chief executive officer, said the surge in foreign buying was a proof of investors' confidence in the economy and in the country's political stability.

"Noise from bitter political bickering has subsided, and the lack of unnecessary distraction from the political arena has helped investors focus on good news from the economic and corporate front," Lim explained.

The stock market earlier recorded hefty gains but posted a steep 84.8-point drop yesterday to 2,378.74, its biggest drop in points since Jan. 17, 2001 when

it shed 93 points.

The market dropped 3.4 percent yesterday, its sharpest decline since July 5 last year.

Local traders attributed the market's steep fall to the Wall Street's more than 200-point plunge overnight after US investors were alarmed by a nearly 1 percent hike in April inflation.

Foreign selling yesterday amounted to P1.54 billion, higher than the buying of P978 million.

Despite yesterday's performance, Lim expects foreign buying to grow in the coming months.

On the average, the daily total foreign buying amounted to P487.75 million during the second week of April, P988.52 million in the third week of April and reached P1.5 billion at the end of the said month.

Lim also confirmed that foreigners sold on the average P427.6 million worth of stocks during the second week of April, P716.49 million on the following week and P1.34 billion on the last week of April.

After deducting the selling orders, daily net foreign buying averaged P60.15 million, P272.04 million and P157.75 million during the respective weeks in comparison.

Lim said net foreign buying dropped in the last week of April as an offshoot of the heavy selling on April 24, when foreigners sold P1.71 billion worth of stocks.

VAT collection hits P16.1B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT RAISED P16.1 BILLION in additional revenue through the Reformed VAT Law (RVAT) in the first quarter, the Department of Finance said yesterday.

In a statement, the DOF said the amount of RVAT collection in the first three months of the year was about 4 percent higher than the target of P15.5 billion.

This, the DOF said, meant the government was on track to meeting the P75-billion full-year incremental revenue target of the government.

Of the total RVAT collections in the first quarter, P5.1 billion was contributed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), which slightly missed its target of P5.6 billion.

The shortfall of the BIR, however, was compensated by the over-performance of the Bureau of Customs. The DOF said the BOC collected P11 billion in additional revenue from the RVAT, higher than its target of P12.2 billion.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said in a statement that the higher-than-programmed RVAT collection by the BOC was attributed to the increase in oil prices. The higher the prices of oil, the higher the amount of tariff collection, he explained.

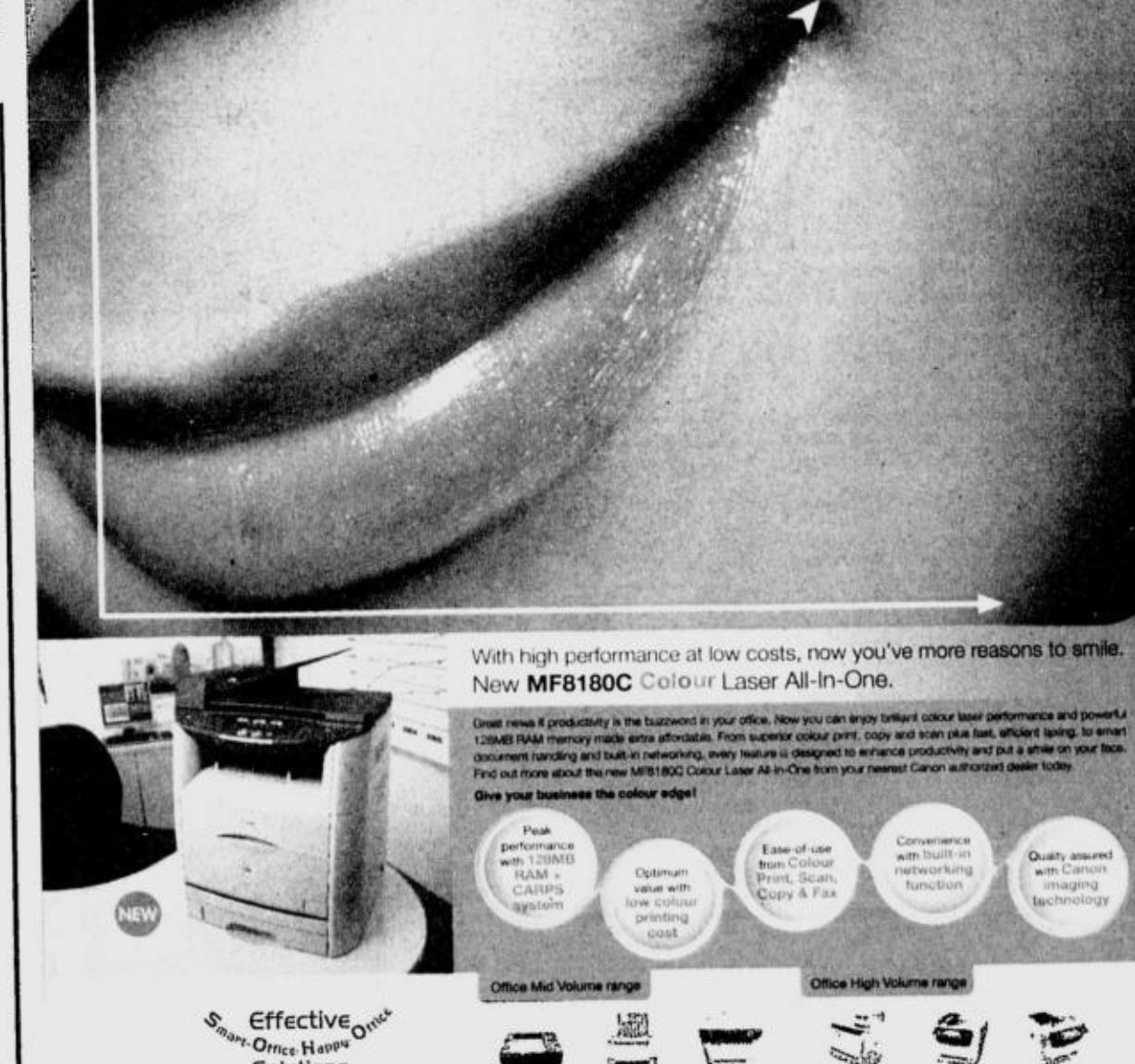
The BIR failed to meet its RVAT collection target but the finance official said the agency was expected to catch up in the coming months.

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In the Philippines, Emerson Network Power has recently appointed Lamco as its new distributor for Liebert's Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and related products in the Philippines. Lamco's key

role will be to distribute Liebert UPS widely across the Philippines, so that even the simplest SOHO desktop applications would have the benefit of being protected by a Liebert solution.

"Uptime solutions are a critical economic issue for the SOHO market. Downtime and power failures bring real-time business operations to standstill and can cost thousands to SOHOs, which rely heavily on short-term revenues," said Gene Hayden, VP Sales & Marketing & Asia Pacific General Manager, Emerson Network Power. "With the growing susceptibility of business to downtime, caused by climatic and other environmental factors, UPS has become a necessity in the SOHO space".

The experience that Emerson Network Power brings to the SME market is one typified by our extensive relationship with the global Fortune 500 companies. We protect 100% of the Fortune 500 and as such lead into the SME /SOHO market with "high 9's" equivalent technology. The true online Liebert GXT UPS solution for example is deployed to protect network servers, bridges, hubs, routers, storage devices and critical workstations with this high level of protection and availability to the network environment.

For information on the full Emerson Network Power Power Quality portfolio, please visit their website on www.emersonnetworkpower.com or www.liebert.com

People, Events & Products

Unilab sustains campaign against malnutrition

UNITED LABORATORIES INC (UNILAB), THE COUNTRY'S leading pharmaceutical company, has intensified its efforts to help fight child malnutrition in the country. For the first quarter of 2006 alone, some 1,500 children have benefited from Unilab's feeding and nutrition programs conducted in key cities in the country in partnership with companies, parishes, non-government and socio-civic organizations.

Malnutrition is a serious global health problem, annually claiming 5.5 million children under five years of age. The Philippines, with 3 million children below five who are undernourished, is one of the countries with the largest number. This child nutrition indicator covers moderate and severe cases from 1996 to 2005. Thirty percent of the age group suffers from stunting or being too short for one's age while six percent has been classified as wasted or dangerously thin.

According to the Department of Health, the malnutrition situation in the country has not substantially improved in the last 15 years and child malnutrition rate has remained at 30 percent level for over a decade.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) said that develop-

ing countries like the Philippines should do far more for their undernourished children to meet a long-time United Nations goal to reduce by half the number of the world's underweight infants by 2015. In a report, Unicef Country Representative Dr. Nicholas Alipui disclosed that damages of malnutrition to children include lower intelligence, reduced physical capacity and passing malnutrition to the next generation. "All these result to reduction in productivity and sluggish economic growth, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty," he said in a news report.

Realizing the urgent need for collaborative efforts to curb the growing malnutrition problem in the country, Unilab stepped up its efforts by initiating partnerships with major private corporations, parish networks and non-government and socio-civic organizations for joint feeding and nutrition programs in such areas as Valenzuela, Kalookan, Pasig, Pasay and Bulacan. These are initial activities which Unilab and its partners hope to deploy in more areas in the country to reach out to more malnourished children.

Just recently, Unilab, through its Unilab Medical Education and Development (Umed) office, organized a conference on malnutrition for over 500 healthcare professionals to discuss the state of malnutrition in country, the current feeding practices among infants and young children, and the initiatives to help counter malnutrition. Resource persons from Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, University of the Philippines College of Medicine and Wayne State University were invited to discuss the issues.

"We believe that as a Filipino pharmaceutical company, it is our social responsibility to help in addressing major health issues in the country, like malnutrition, using our available resources," says Unilab chair Jocelyn Campos Hess. "We are doing this because this is the right thing to do."

Unilab is set out to conduct more continuing medical education programs for healthcare professionals to update them on current health issues and encourage them to participate in the solution. Unilab has likewise targeted more partnerships with organizations for the conduct of feeding and nutrition programs in more areas starting this year. All these initiatives are consistent with Unilab's social mission of providing safe, effective and affordable healthcare and improve the health of as many Filipinos as possible.

Cream, proven results in just 7 days for the face, underarm, groin, nape and other dark spots of the body. Regular celebrity clients include Melanie Marquez, Alma Concepcion, Sherry Regis, and Elizabeth Oropesa. The center is located at the 2nd floor, Unit 204, Tulip Center (fronting Norkis), AS Fortuna Avenue, Mandaue City. For inquiries, call (032)255-0674 (Cebu City), or 413-3375. Shown at the Mandaue branch opening are (from left) Angela Calina ('Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition' housemate), Lising, actor Patrick Garcia and beauty queen Daisy Reyes.



ELLEN'S OPENS 2ND BRANCH IN MANDAUE CITY

Ellen's Aesthetics and Whitening Center recently opened its 2nd branch in Cebu in Mandaue City. This is the center's 12th branch nationwide. Ellen Lising, president, said the center now has more than 26 years of skin care and permanent cosmetics expertise. It offers a wide line-up of skin care and whitening treatments such as facial, diamond peel, laser light hair removal, underarm whitening scrub, foot whitening, white glow body treatment and the new SPRT (skin photo rejuvenation treatment). Also available exclusively at Ellen's is the whitening phenomenon Miracle Whitening

Cream, proven results in just 7 days for the face, underarm, groin, nape and other dark spots of the body. Regular celebrity clients include Melanie Marquez, Alma Concepcion, Sherry Regis, and Elizabeth Oropesa. The center is located at the 2nd floor, Unit 204, Tulip Center (fronting Norkis), AS Fortuna Avenue, Mandaue City. For inquiries, call (032)255-0674 (Cebu City), or 413-3375. Shown at the Mandaue branch opening are (from left) Angela Calina ('Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition' housemate), Lising, actor Patrick Garcia and beauty queen Daisy Reyes.



IAJE INKS DEAL WITH REGINE VELASQUEZ

In-A-Jiffy Enterprises (IAJE) recently inked an endorsement deal for its WOW videoke microphone with 'Asia's Songbird' Regine Velasquez. This represents the brand's major marketing thrust, by connecting a variety of integrated marketing activities with its new packaging/logo design and TVC. IA-

JE/G2K Corp are the exclusive distributors of WOW, the best selling Magic Sing videoke microphone in the country. Shown are (from left) Mike Sanchez, marketing and promotions manager IAJE, Olive Sanchez, general manager IAJE, Regine Velasquez and Cris Llamo, chief operations officer, IAJE.

Odor remover, 0-chlorine pools

ELECTROMEX INC, THE country's only high-tech ozone gas generator manufacturer, provides a non-chemical odor remover and air purifier (Ozonator) for hotels, hospitals, resorts, malls, offices, printing presses, houses, cars, and restaurants.

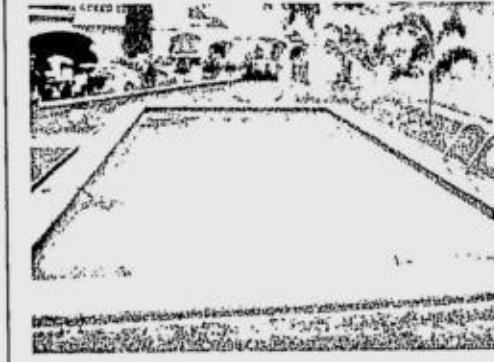
Electromex Ozonators are guaranteed to remove cigarette smoke and odors emanating from wet garbage, wet carpet, vomit, rotten food and wet paint. Ozone (O3) is a safe natural gas that sterilizes the air and kills germs and odor-causing bacteria, even airborne viruses. Thus, ozone



kills germs without having to "mask" its effect with fragrances and expensive scents.

Electromex also builds inexpensive, portable water treatment systems and Ozonators for small Jacuzzis all the way to Olympic-size swimming pools, eliminating the use of dangerous chlorine and muriatic acids. Using the Electromex swimming pool zero-chlorine water Ozonator removes algae, fungus and molds instantly. It's like swimming in a giant mineral water pool.

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- Familiar on Notebook and PC product engineering analysis;
- Must have related work experience in plant production Eng'g;
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Subic Bay Industrial Park, Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Telephone No. (047) 252-77-40 ; Facsimile: (047) 2526223

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ChinaBank dollar savings accounts and certificate of time deposits of the late DIVINA B. PERALTA was adjudicated thru Extra-Judicial Settlement by her surviving heirs and shall be released thru S.P.A. Jesus B. Peralta as per Doc. No. 388, Page 77, Book IV, Series of 2006, of Notary Public Henry S. Banares, ARN 19348.

(PDI - May 12, 19 & 26, 2006)



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680 yrs

690 yrs

700 yrs

A Message of Gratitude

The Family

of

Jose Y. Campos

who passed away peacefully in the Grace of our Lord
on May 1, 2006 at the age of 84.

His loving wife
BEATRICE

His loving children
JOY
BUTCH & OLLIE
JEFFREY
ELIZABETH

His loving grandchildren
CLINTON & JACQUELINE
CHRISSEY
MIKEY
JEANETTE
JACLYN & LUKE
JAY
JANELLE
JAMIE
NIÑA

conveys our sincerest gratitude to everyone
who expressed their sympathy
in our moment of sorrow.

"I am
the way,
the truth
and the
life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me."
John 14:6

"Our true home is Heaven and Jesus Christ whose return
we long for will come to save us" Php 3:20
Our Dearly Beloved

LEONOR ESMERALDA ASERON

Peacefully joined her Creator and son ILDRICH & grandson LEE MICHAEL
on May 15, 2006 at the age of 71.

Her bereaved husband ILDEFONSO; daughters and sons-in-law LEONIDA & CARMELITO, LORYLENE & VIRGILIO, LEIRIAN & BRADERICK and sons ITHURIEL & IVARLUSKI; her grandchildren MYTZLE, MAE, BRYEN & CRISNEL, DIDIER, ILDRICH, JADE, TONI, KRISHA, KOLEEN and KAELE and her great grandchild KAYVEE, request YOU to join in thanksgiving to God for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is on May 21, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.
at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

REALTOR VICENTE OSIAS ORPIANO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on May 17, 2006 at the age of 85.

His loving wife, Carmen (†); children Corazon (†), Elsa, Mildred, Naty, Olga, Sonia, Vince, Manuel, Amado, Mike, Buds, JR and Tess; grandchildren Jen, Jon, Glory, Amy, Michael, Gail, Mark, Aljay, John, Jordan, Janine, Ivan, Vlad, Michael, Oliver, Diane, Nico, Arlene and Kanoa; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel D, La Funeraria Paz,
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, May 23, 2006
at the Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora Ave., Quezon City.

Death Notice

DOMINADOR J. SABINAY

"Amo/Mang Domeng"

Born Oct. 20, 1944

Died in the grace of our Lord
on May 16, 2006 at age of 61.

He is survived by his wife Tita M. Sabinay; children: Emily, Eddie, Shirley & Normel, and Sheryl & Jason.

His body lies at Guerrero Chapel,
Guerrero St., San Juan, M.M.

Interment will be tomorrow, May 20,
2006 after the 2:30 p.m. Mass at San Felipe
Neri Church at Romano Catolico Cemetery,
Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City.

MARIANITO 'NITOY'
O. SABANA, SR.

Passed away on May 15, 2006
at the age of 67.

Funeral Mass will be on May 20, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. at
Funeraria Nacional, Chapel 2-C.

Interment will follow at Himlayang Pilipino
immediately after the mass.

More CLASSIFIED ADS
on pages A8, A10, A23 & A26

MERCEDES PIEDAD LIGOT

March 2, 1915 - May 17, 2006
(Widow of Dr. Fernando C. Ligot)

Her beloved children: Dr. ANTONIO and SYLVIA CRUZ, CARMELITA and KENNETH BUTTERFIELD, LORENZO and Ma. CRISTINA CUENCA, CECILIA and AMANTE BERGAMIN Jr., ALEJANDRO and CHARITY RANADA and MAURICE; grandchildren, great grandchildren, and relatives give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of her life.

Her body lies in state at Chapel 3, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City. Cremation will be on Sunday morning and her ashes will be brought to Laoag City shortly after.

In lieu of flowers, we would appreciate donations to The Good News Clinic and Hospital in Banaue, Ifugao and Sacred Heart Chapel, Laoag City.

Our Dearly Beloved

CECILIO "Ogie" DOMINGO OBISPO

Now peacefully rests in the infinite
Grace and Goodness of the Lord at the age of 72.

His wife Rizalina, children Ma. Carmela & Jesus Antonio, Juan Carlos, grandchildren Jeremy Michael, Jessica Marie and Jamie Margaret, Relatives and Friends request the Pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel O, Guadalupe, Makati City and will be moved to Loyola Memorial Park Marikina, May 20, 2006 at 11:00 am.

Funeral Mass at Loyola Memorial Chapel O, Guadalupe, Makati City at 9:00am, May 20, 2006.

BUSINESS

Indophil ups estimate of Tampakan reserves

By Christine A. Gaylican

INDOPHIL RESOURCES NL OF Australia has raised its estimates of the mineral reserves of the Tampakan copper-gold mine in Mindanao.

Indophil managing director Tony Robbins said in an interview yesterday that the new mineral resource estimates placed copper reserves at 250,000 metric tons, up 32 percent from the initial estimates, while gold reserves were set at 150,000 ounces a year.

The revised figures were based on the results of feasibility studies and drillings done at the Tampakan mines bordering the provinces of South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur.

"This increases the viability of the mine project, which requires more than a billion dollars to develop before production commences in 2010," Robbins noted.

He added that the new mineral resource estimates would make Tampakan the biggest undeveloped copper field in Southeast Asia.

Indophil Resources Ltd., which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, has partnered with the Alcantara Group's Alsons Development and Investment Corp. to develop the mine.

Another major investor is X-Strata Plc. based in Switzerland.

Initial estimates showed that the Tampakan reserve, considered a world-class mine, has a gross potential value of about \$14 billion.

Encouraged by the prospects of the country's mineral industry and the government's "all-out" support to their operations, Australian mining firm Indophil Resources NL said it was now considering expanding its mineral exploration program in the Philippines.

Indophil is the mother firm of the Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), which is now conducting a pre-feasibility study on the copper and gold deposits at the boundaries of Tampakan in South Cotabato, Columbio in Sultan Kudarat and Kiblawan in Davao del Sur.

UBS says RP spending cuts not sustainable

Revenue generation better way to plug budget gap

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK UBS HAS WARNED THE government that cutting back on expenditures was not the best way to solve its budget problem, adding that the fiscal performance in April was "disappointing."

In its assessment of the Philippines' fiscal sector, UBS stressed that enhancing revenue-generation was a much preferred way of improving the budget position.

What happened in April was a tightening of government expenditures compensating for weak tax collection, UBS noted.

"With non-interest spending down to less than 12 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) in 2005, and infrastructure and social services in urgent need of upgrades, this (controlling expenditure) is not a sustainable source of further budget deficit reduction," the European bank said.

"Non-interest spending" refers to money spent on budget items other than the payment of interest on government debts, such as

capital outlay and basic services.

The Department of Finance earlier reported that the national government posted a P17.6-billion budget surplus in April, putting it closer to meeting the full-year deficit target of P125 billion from last year's P146.8 billion.

The surplus, the highest since 1998, was achieved despite the failure of the Bureau of Internal Revenue to meet its tax-collection target for the month.

Officials explained that the surplus was due to restrained spending.

Data showed that the government spent 25-percent less than the expenditure target for April.

This was despite earlier pronouncements from fiscal authorities that the government would adopt a pump-priming policy, under which it should maximize the over P1 trillion proposed national budget for this year.

The government disbursed only P77.4 billion in April compared with the P103.3-billion program.

The expenditure in April was also 7-per-

cent lower than the P83.4 billion spent during the same month last year.

UBS said it expected government to be forced to keep a restrained spending in the coming months unless authorities see signs of BIR recovering from the April shortfall.

The BIR, which accounts for about 60 percent of government revenues, collected only P71.3 billion during the month compared with its P78.6-billion target.

But Finance Secretary Margarito Teves had said that the government was still bent on meeting its programmed capital-outlay spending for the second quarter, as concerned agencies were expected to undertake major infrastructure development projects in May and June.

The government has allocated P39.3 billion for capital outlay in the second quarter.

Infrastructure spending in the Philippines accounts for only about 3 percent of the country's gross domestic product, below the 5-percent benchmark set by the World Bank for boosting economic growth.

Investors put in \$22M in Subic

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTORS ARE PUTTING IN AT LEAST \$22 million to build more first-class accommodation in Subic as authorities push for the further development of the freeport as a tourist destination.

Armand C. Arreza, chief executive of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said Legenda Hotel wanted to build a second hotel in the freeport.

"The plan is to build a structure with 300 rooms, which would possibly be added with 200 more," Arreza said. "This \$20-million project would provide needed five-star accommodation in Subic."

He explained that the plan was being entertained even as the SBMA board decided not to condone Legenda's arrears totaling P750 million.

Arreza said a payment schedule had been set where the investor would shell out P150 million over three years.

Also, he added that Asia Hotel, which has a boutique hotel on Boracay Island, was looking at building a structure with 50 rooms near Nabasan Beach for \$2 million.

"SBMA welcomes these projects because we want to increase the stock of five-star accommodation here," Arreza said. "Currently, the available rooms in Subic are first-class and standard ones."

Another possible project was Landco Pacific's residential resort in Hidden Beach, although this would be "difficult."

Arreza said Landco wanted to build the resort on a 35-hectare area under a 50-year lease.

In March, SBMA officials said the agency was offering discount rates on aeronautical fees of up to 80 percent in an effort to attract more airline operators and boost tourism in the areas.

The officials said SBMA was looking into the possibility of SBIA being able to service routes to "any point in Asia."

Current carriers using SBIA include Inter-Island Airlines which offers chartered flights to Manila and Taiwan; Mandarin Air with flights to and from Taiwan; Cebu Pacific with flights from Incheon in South Korea; Air Philippines with flights to and from Hong Kong.

3G phone prices seen going down

By Daxim I. Lucas

PRICES OF THIRD-GENERATION (3G) NETWORK cellular phones may drop to the much anticipated \$100 a handset threshold within one year, helping fuel a boom in the service.

This prediction was made yesterday by an official of Smart Communications Inc. as the company launched a service that would allow its subscribers to watch sports programs on their mobile phones.

"We could see a handset price of \$100 within one year," usage marketing and e-services group head Dan Ibarra said in a briefing.

Once this threshold is breached, the industry will see subscriber additions of up to one million a month, similar to what was seen during the boom of the existing second-generation network in the late 1990s, he added.

Ibarra said that nobody knows at present just how big the 3G service can be worth since it remains in its infancy locally as well as abroad.

"But we've made a bet on it," he said, adding that Smart is counting on consumers to make the 3G network their most productive tool for accessing services like entertain-

ment and communication.

Ibarra's prediction of a rapid drop in 3G handset prices is, so far, the most aggressive made by a representative of a local network. Globe Telecom Inc. president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. earlier made the same prediction although he aired a more cautious note on the rate of the new technology's mass acceptance.

At present, the cheapest 3G phones sell for the equivalent of \$225 per unit, while the most advanced models sell for as much as \$500 each.

Yesterday, Smart, together with sister firm PLDT and Wolfpac, signed an agreement with IMG Media for the latter to provide 3G sports content that can be viewed via Smart's 3G phones.

IMG Media is a division of IMG, the world's largest sports and entertainment company.

The 3G sports content will cover news about a range of sports, including tennis, golf and football, as well as local events like the MVP Cup and the JVC Badminton Open.

Local sports are also covered with instructional content which will allow users to learn techniques from the professionals.

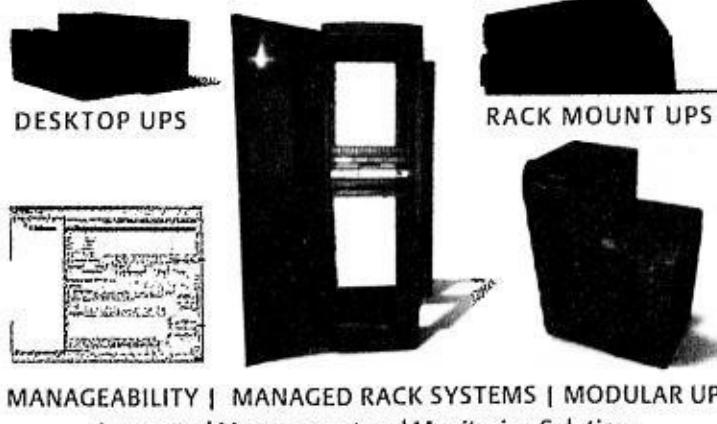
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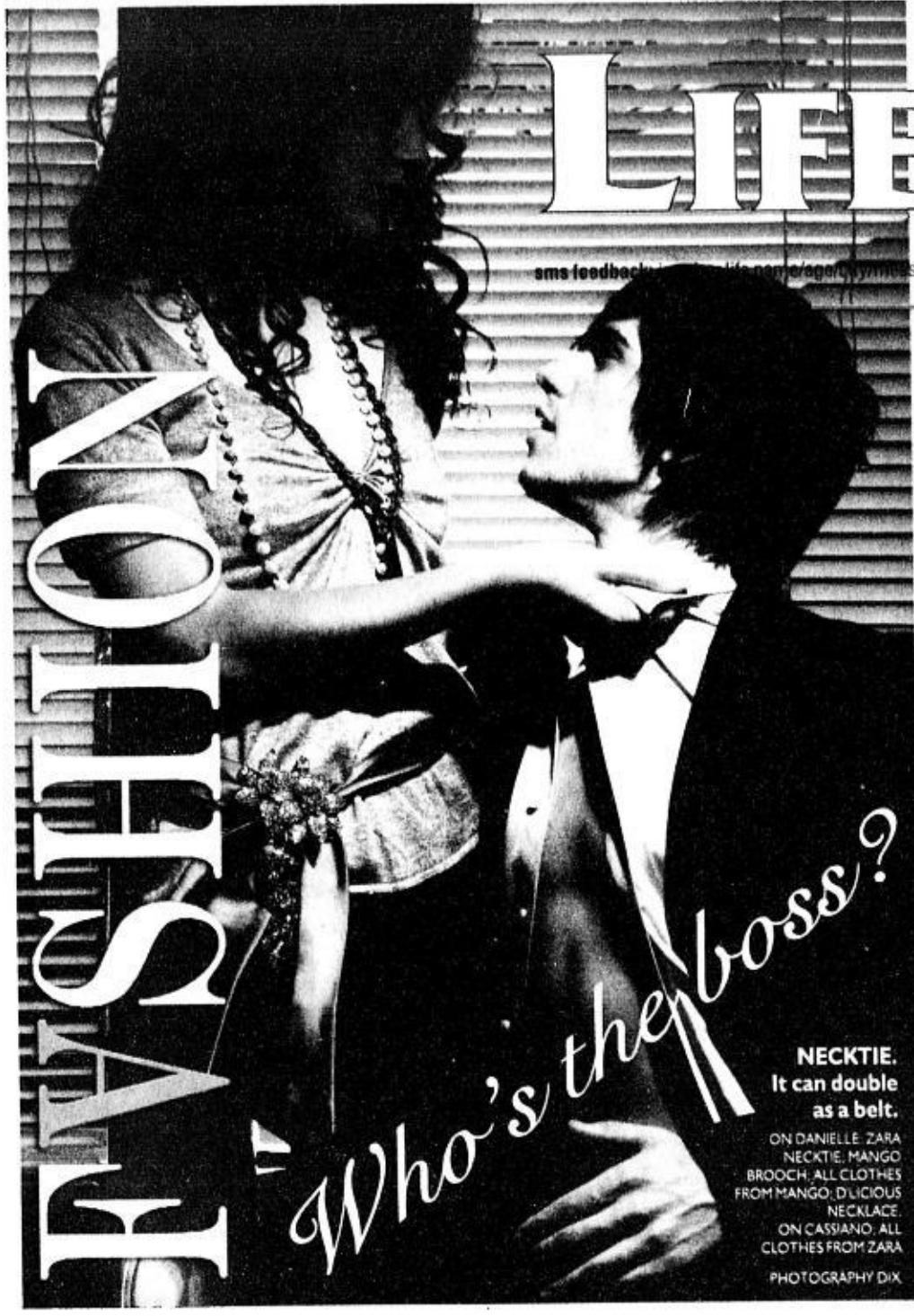
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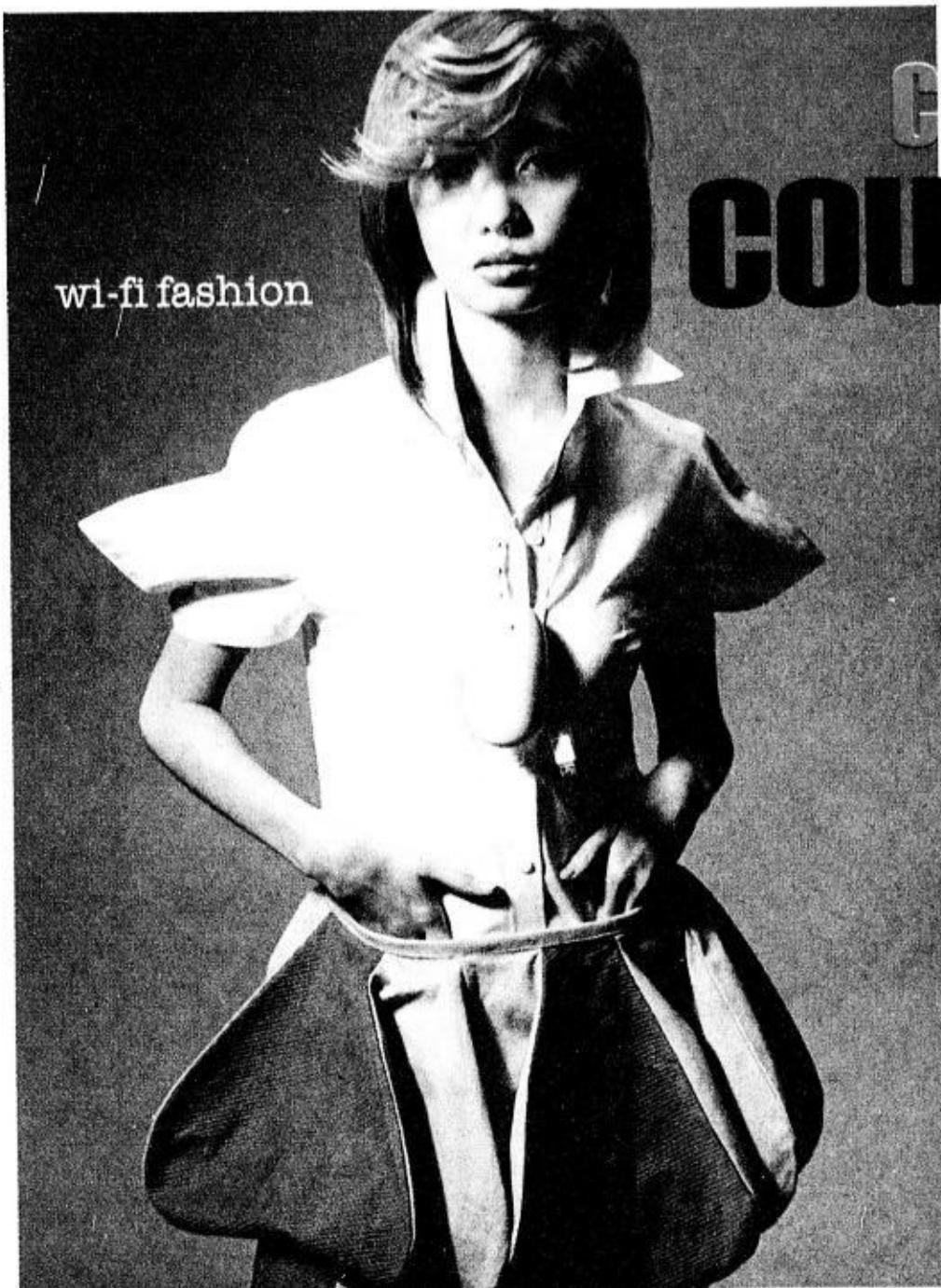


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wi-fi fashion

Cubicle couture

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HAIR L'OREAL COLOR TROPHY GRAND PRIZE WINNER, RICHARD BILALO JR. OF PIANDRE SALON, GREENBELT, MAKEUP ROSE MACAPAGAL

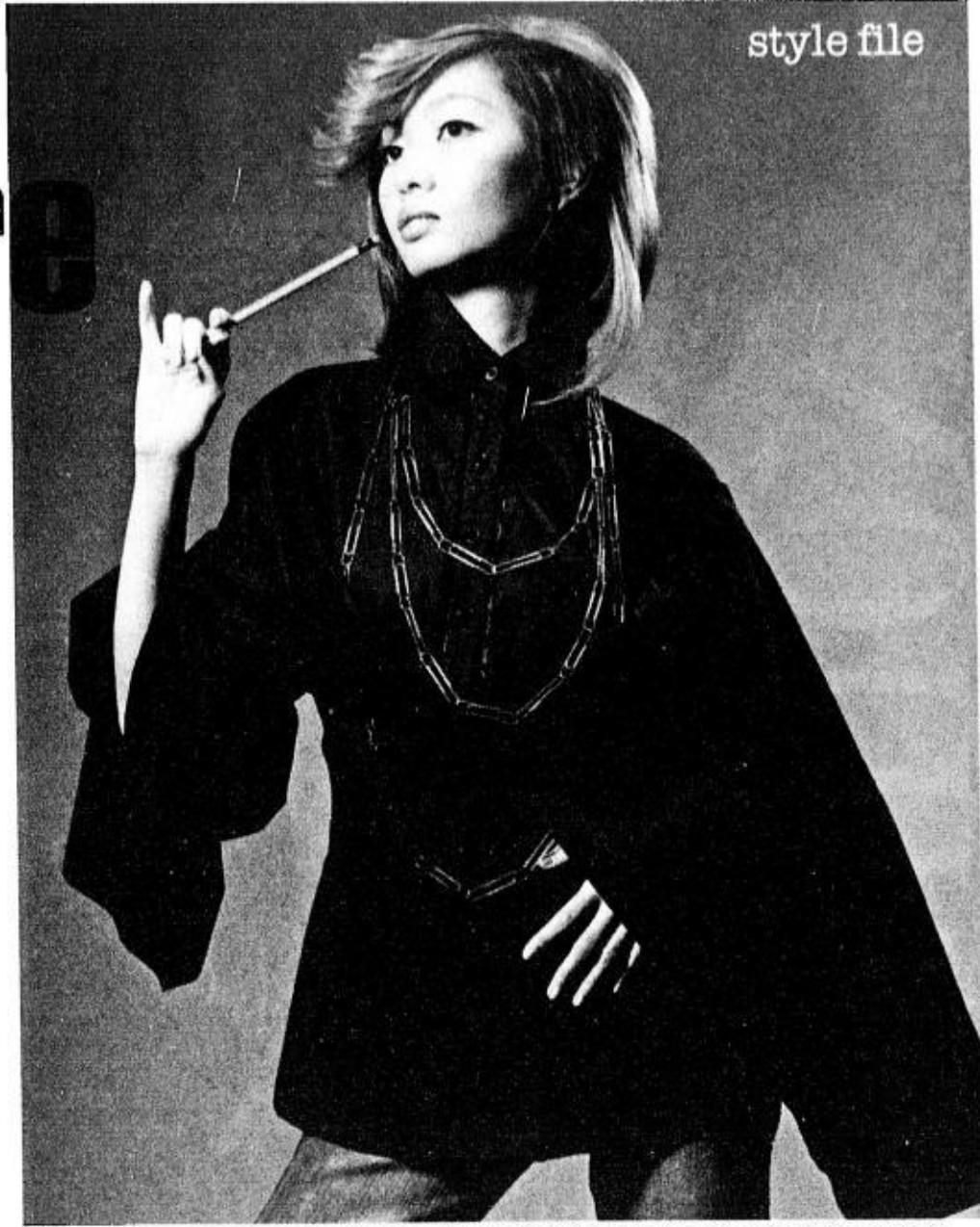


well-connected



HAIR L'OREAL COLOR TROPHY SECOND RUNNER-UP, DINDO DACALDACA OF VIVA SALON IN CEBU

PHOTOGRAPHY TOM EPPERSON
STYLING JENNI EPPERSON OF BIG ON STYLE
(BIG ON STYLE@YAHOO.COM)
FASHION JAMES REYES (0917-6236183)
MODELS PIE ARCIÑUE, TRACY LARA AND SISSEL RABAJANTE
SPECIAL THANKS TO ANGELIQUE VILLARAZA



style file

HAIR L'OREAL COLOR TROPHY GRAND PRIZE WINNER, RICHARD BILALO JR. OF PIANDRE SALON, GREENBELT, MAKEUP ROSE MACAPAGAL

HAVE YOU BEEN TO A DOG competition? Breed after breed, dog after dog just running 'round and 'round for others to look over, criticize and weed out.

Oh? Did I just describe your office?

It's hard to stand out from the pinstriped clones, so it's essential to bring a little something to the workplace that will make you shine like the top executive that you are. It's not just about your color-coordinated pie-graphs and bar charts. It's also about bringing the vavavoom to the boardroom.

No matter how many hours of overtime you've pulled, no matter how many PowerPoint presentations you've crunched in that cute little laptop of yours or how many times you've had an afternoon delight with your boss (Ooh, you little devil!), there is no rock-solid assurance that the big guns upstairs are going to give you that corner office with the espresso machine.

So what will make you, Fashionista Poodle, different from all the other doggies in the dog pound? A sense of vavavoom, a touch of fun and a whole lot of *kwela*. And James Reyes' hip corporate couture.

James Reyes (0917-6236183) a Young Designers Guild (YDG) groupie, whips up fun

and fabulous bespoke dress shirts for the kind of pretty poodle that you are.

"I enjoy people's wit and character. My creations are for women who are creative and have a sense of humor," he says. "I get inspired by them—pretty much people who are like my friends in advertising."

It is no surprise that James, who has worked many a dog day's afternoon as an associate creative director for an advertising firm, knows that bundy clock bondage is inevitable and the only salvation is the office hottie... and your eye-candy attire.

By revolutionizing the dress shirt, James' pieces will bring much-needed (and should-be-required!) excitement in what is otherwise a sea of boxy pantsuits and double-breasted blazers. He's fused fun fashion with corporate sensibility by mixing traditional custom tailoring with a dash of free-flow movement.

So, my pretty little poodles, add a little bite to your outfits by pairing these contemporary dress shirts with classics like pinstriped pants and pencil skirts, and accessorize them with simple pearls or diamonds.

Looking this chic, you'll definitely be ready when they start handing out the blue ribbon called promotion.

E-mail the author jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

From his closet to your Wardrobe

THEY SAY THAT IT'S A MAN'S world, especially in the workplace. While this may be true, mindsets have been changing fortunately in the past decades. Proof of this is the fact that there are more women leaders nowadays. Gloria Arroyo and Cory Aquino are just a couple of examples of the female of the species leading a predominantly patriarchal society.

APPLES' PICKINGS



Apples Aberin-Sadhwan

The key to this sartorial takeover is simple: While wearing your man's articles of clothing, always allow your femininity to shine through.

Even the workforce is full of hardworking wives and mothers who've managed the shift from bedroom to boardroom. Superwomen the world over now manage to combine both domestic and professional lives, and they do so with flying colors.

That said, allow me to encourage all working women out there not to settle for a mere domination of world affairs. Go ahead and take over your man's closet as well. When dressing for work, raid your better half's fashion booty for men's basics that you can easily incorporate into your wardrobe.

Your man's basic white shirt is perfect for this mission. Match it with leggings, drainpipe pants or a sexy, ultra-narrow pencil skirt. And don't forget to emphasize your womanly curves by using a wide belt.

Accessories also play a major role in this bid for "closet control," so while you're at it, swipe his timepiece, too. His oversized watch will look especially stylish with your feminine garb and dainty wrists. Mix it up with bangles, bracelets and charms for a more fashionable feel.

Another item you can easily make your own is his necktie. Instead of using a belt or sash, grab his tie and use it to cinch your waist. His bright-colored ties or cravats are the perfect contrast to your neutral work wardrobe. For added flash, accessorize with a sparkly brooch.

The key to this sartorial takeover is quite simple: While wearing your man's articles of clothing, always allow your femininity to shine through. So don those spiky stilettos and vibrant red lips and don't let anyone forget that you're all woman, even though they say it's a man's world.

E-mail the author at afashion@inquirer.com.ph



MEN'S WHITE SHIRT. Cinch an oversize shirt with a wide belt to make it your own.

ON DANIELLE: ZARA MEN'S WHITE LONG SLEEVES, MANGO PANTS, D'LOCIOUS NECKLACE AND BANGLES, GUCCI BELT.

ON CASSIANO: HUGO BOSS PANTS, GUCCI BELT.

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MEN'S WATCH.
Wear chunky
chains, charms and
bangles with your
husby's watch.

ON DANIELLE: EMPORIO
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CHAIN BELT, KENNETH
COLE AND FIRMA
BRACELETS, FIRMA EAR
RING (USED ON SLEEVE),
ON CASSIANO: ZARA
BLACK LONG SLEEVES,
BALLY CUFFLINK

FOXTROT



BY BILL AMEND A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN



BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY



BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES



BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS



BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY



BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have the courage of your own beliefs. You work tirelessly to fight for justice. Many of you are self-taught. (The works of others inspire you.) Ultimately, you will not ignore your spiritual life. You're very bold about exploring the world in your teens and 20s. A big change (perhaps as significant as in 1997) will take place this year.

Birthday of: Lorraine Hansberry, playwright/activist; Malcolm X, activist; Joey Ramone, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Group discussions intensify in the next few weeks. You will also meet new people, and possibly travel more. Your mind is very alive now. This is not the time to stay at home and relax.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today Mercury enters your sign, where it will stay for the next two weeks. This makes your mind jump from one issue to another issue very rapidly. You have a strong desire to communicate with others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Conversations with friends and groups, especially younger people, appeal to you in the next two to three weeks. You feel younger, more alive and pretty hip to the scene!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 19): You can expect to think about business and commercial affairs more than usual for the next two to three weeks. No doubt you'll be shopping more than usual as well.

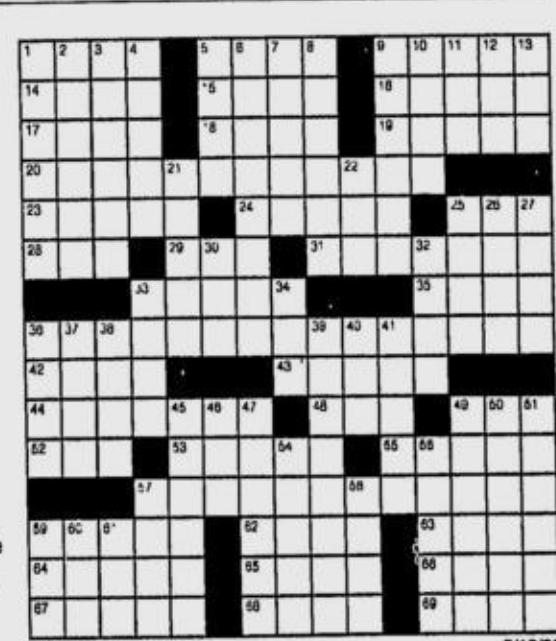
CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Research into hidden secrets appeals to you now and in the next few weeks. Learn what you can. Your attention to detail will be very good.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next week or so, conversations with bosses, parents and authority figures are quite significant. Be prepared to speak up. People will listen to you.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 At any time
- 5 Questions
- 9 Set to go
- 14 Eternal City
- 15 Give a blis to
- 16 Clarinetist
- Shaw
- 17 Wonder about
- 18 Trigonometric function
- 19 Fools
- 20 Expectation from an amulet?
- 23 Hangman's knot
- 24 Spicy condiment
- 25 Hiatus
- 28 "Le coq __"
- 29 Pair
- 31 "Amadeus" role
- 33 Tel Aviv-
- 35 Reservoir filler
- 36 Flack who is terse?
- 42 Scallion's relative
- 43 Short putt
- 44 Something for nothing
- 48 Blue
- 49 Half of MXII
- 52 Pismire
- 53 To date
- 55 MacDonald's refrain
- 57 Stuck, already!
- 59 __ for the ride
- 62 Non-negotiable
- 63 Actress
- Kedrova
- 64 Pooh's creator
- 65 Pac-10 team
- 66 Actress Moran
- 67 Old World snake
- 68 Produces eggs
- 69 Miller play, "All My __"
- 70 To-do list item
- 72 Caribbean cult
- 73 Key of Boccherini's string quartet
- 74 Romulus' twin
- 75 Exec's aide



By Norma Steinberg

San Francisco, CA

5/19/06

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

6	Takes first cut	BALI	DONUT	ACES
7	Ethiopia's neighbor	OLIN	IVANI	LAVA
8	Expands	CONSCIENCE	USED	AUDIO
9	Scamp	GRE	RYAN	REED
10	Composer	IS WHAT MAKES A BOY		
11	Satire	BART	REL	PEABO
12	24-hr. cash source	EYE	TELL HIS REY	
13	Tango move	ANSWER	EEC	STLO
14	You bet!	MOTHER	BEFORE HIS	
15	U.N. host	REAR	NOM	
16	Material	OPAL	NUTS	ASILE
17	Very dry	MAXI	SISTER	DOES
18	Bowling targets	EPIC	OSKAR	RYES
19	Craft of sci-fi	NASH	MESTA	YARE
20	Something to pump?	Boxer LaMotte		
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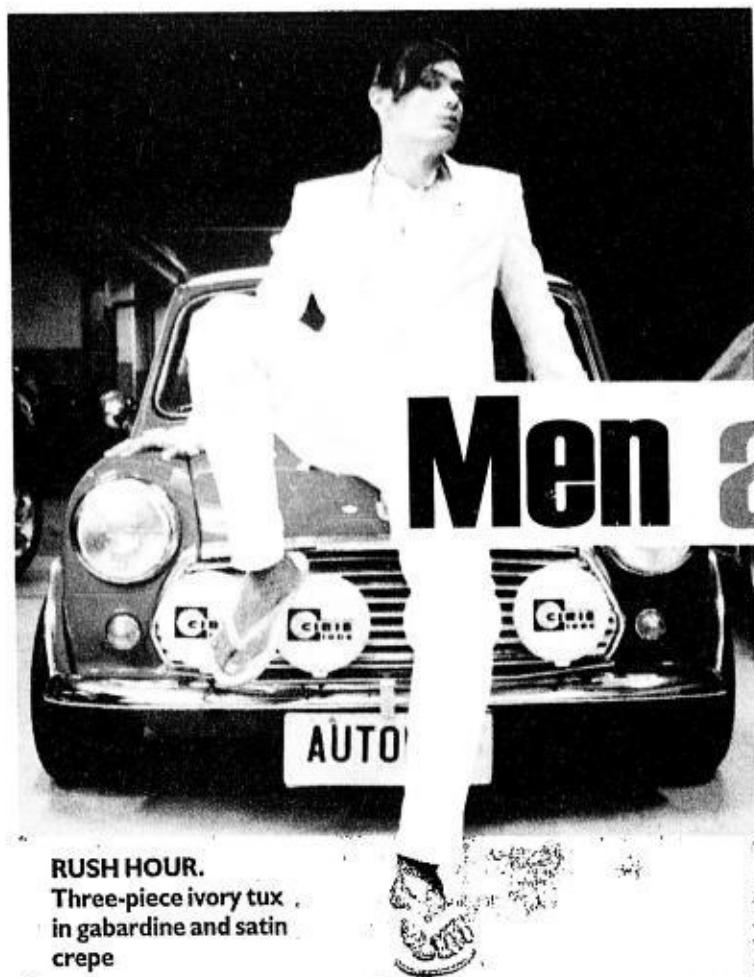
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5/19



RUSH HOUR.
Three-piece ivory tux
in gabardine and satin
crepe



TROUBLESHOOTERS.
On Albert: Gray double-breasted coat over white high-collared tuxedo shirt and light gray pinstriped pants. On Peter: Blue-and-gray checkered overcoat with gartered waist and gray pinstriped pants

By Alex Y. Vergara

UNLIKE WOMEN, MOST men don't make an effort to regularly update their wardrobes. Since guys aren't as vulnerable as women to shifting trends in fashion, many shop for clothes (prodded in no small way by their partners) or visit their tailors only when the need arises. Well and good.

But such a perfunctory approach to fashion shouldn't be an excuse for you to neglect your closets. Only by keeping tabs of what you have can you make wise shopping decisions in the future, says fashion designer Joey Samson.

"It's rare to see a guy go through his clothes regularly," he says. "They should. It's the only way to find out what you have and what you don't have, what you don't use and what you should use, what you should keep and what you should discard."

Such information will also come in handy if and when you decide to update or beef up your current wardrobe. Even if you're not a slave to trends, it's important to know by heart the contents of your cabinet before buying something major, like a bespoke suit or designer jacket.

Will the suit work with your current pieces—from shoes to belts, shirts to ties? If not, are you willing to shell out extra cash for new stuff aimed at complementing that suit? Does the jacket look a lot like an old one you still use? Would it be better to postpone the purchase or go for a different style, color and make?

"Such knowledge will not only save you money," says Samson. "It will also leave you with an uncluttered wardrobe and save you

*You can
always vary
the look of
a well-made
suit by
wearing
and
combining
it with a
different
shirt, tie,
belt, shoes
and even
socks*

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Black
satined
two-button
jacket with
armholes cut
inwards over
wine dotted
knit shirt
and denim
trousers with
long-john
details



TOOLS OF THE TRADE. On Albert: Olive jacket with front strap closure detail, yellow pinstriped shirt and pale blue pants. On Peter: beige satinized twill jacket and pants with dark-aqua shirt and olive suede tie

from going on frequent trips to the mall or your tailor."

Apart from taking a mental note of your sartorial possessions, it's important that you do a cursory self-examination of such basics as your personality, lifestyle and career (nothing heavy, though, that might lead you to question your faith or sexuality).

"I always ask clients, especially first-timers, about their careers and lifestyles," says Samson. "I also ask them whether or not they're familiar with my work, as I need to know if their sense of style is more suited to another designer."

Other primary considerations, of course, are budget and the occasion for which you intend to wear the ensemble. Being faddish has its rewards, but it will certainly cost you more. Unlike safe and classic cuts, edgy details are more likely to make your key pieces look identifiable and dated sometimes even before the new season rolls in.

Safe choices

If you opt for classic pieces, however, you need not repeat yourself and sacrifice style. You can always vary the look of a well-made suit by wearing and combining it with a different shirt, tie, belt, shoes and even socks.

"Apart from paying attention to your staples," says Samson, "you should also be particular about the suit's fit, proportion, construction and materials. Such attributes can make or break a look."

A white jacket—an unusual choice to wear to the office, to begin with—made of flimsy material, for instance, can leave its wearer looking like a doctor or, worse, an X-ray technician. The material should be heavy enough to impart the jacket with the right "fall." Off-white or bone is a safer choice for the office, compared to stark white.

"When in doubt, go for classic pieces," he says. "You should also dress for comfort and the prevailing weather."

Being classic doesn't necessarily mean being boring. Certainly not in the hands of a designer like Samson, who can transform even the most reticent client into a snappy dresser sometimes without him even knowing it.

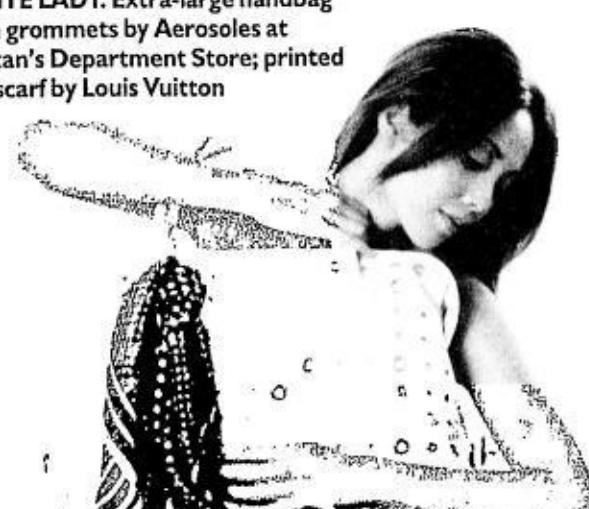
Thanks to his fertile imagination and adept tailoring skills, Samson is able to infuse subtle details on the suit as well as rework established ways of cutting and manipulating fabrics. The results run the gamut from semi-circular panels to inverted seams, from slanted front pockets to atypical armholes.

"Most of my male clients hardly notice such unusual features," says Samson with a wink. "It's usually their wives and girlfriends who notice them. They come to me and whisper in hushed tones how they love this or that detail."

Their men, of course, look all the better because of such subtle details.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.net

WHITE LADY. Extra-large handbag with grommets by Aerosoles at Rustan's Department Store; printed silk scarf by Louis Vuitton



*Big on function,
bigger on style—power
totes for the stylish
working woman*

**DON'T
SHOOT THE
MESSENGER.**
Canvas logo
bag with
leather strap
by Bally

Case in point

By Cheche V. Moral

SIZE MATTERS, SEASON trend reports say. They mean women's purses, of course—large, spacious satchels that can fit a Powerbook, a Thermos of caffeine and, well, maybe a few loose change, a bottle of formula and a small child.

Ask any busy multitasking woman and she'll tell you this is possibly the most practical trend that has come to fore of late. Finally, something that can fit her entire daily hectic life into!

Big, however, isn't the only consideration when picking a bag that goes to work with you and works for you.

Take into account your work environment—is it creative or thoroughly staid and professional? A metallic, slouchy bag is okay for someone who works, say, in advertising, but may be deemed too casual for a bank executive, so opt for something more structured.

"Structured" doesn't, however, mean boring. They now come in a variety of shapes that mimic more casual styles. Even styles in the more traditional blacks and browns come in woven or textured materials, with golden metal hardware and other interesting details—check out the handles, shoulder straps or flaps. An unexpected color, of course, is the perfect foil to a dark suit.

Remember that professional doesn't have to mean drab. A bright, colored scarf tied around the handle or some nice little charms dangling on the side are guaranteed to add



**CASE THE
JOINT.** Polka-dot laptop bag with leather trim by Kate Spade; yellow leather key chain by Kate Spade



BUCKLE UP. Camel leather tote
by Salvatore Ferragamo; butterfly key chain
by Salvatore Ferragamo

PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK HOEPSMIT
STYLING MAUREEN DININI OF BIG ON STYLE
(BIG.ON.STYLE@YAHOO.COM)
HAIR AND MAKEUP JIGS MAYUGA OF LOREAL PARIS
MODEL TERESA HERRERA OF CALCARIE'S

punch to the most sober of black bags.

Logos are also something to watch out for. Again, the screaming kind has no place in a formal work atmosphere. What if it's a Louis Vuitton, you ask? Well, insolent woman, the Monogram Canvas, maybe, but save the Denim for the weekend or a night in the town. Besides, you don't want your bosses to think they're paying you too much by going around flaunting big-name logos in the office. (Uh-oh.)

Your objective here is to find one that's big on function. But never, ever, scrimp on style. Take, for instance, your laptop bag. If it's the generic black kind with a thick shoulder strap, emblazoned on the front with a logo other than your company's or your laptop's (read: a freebie scored from somewhere), junk it now! Leave those to the boys.

The market is increasingly recognizing the demand for totes that can fit women's tech stuff—and vanity kit at the same time. If you look hard enough, you will find briefcases and laptop bags in a surfeit of colors and materials, and styles that have built-in padded sleeves for a laptop; compartments for a cell phone, a Blackberry, battery chargers, an iPod; a binder of documents, magazines and your makeup.

Best of all, they're so pretty they don't look like laptop bags at all (or what you used to think they are, at least).

It's a real challenge, this quest for the perfect laptop case that suits the chic working woman that you are. If you do find one, chances are the price tag can make quite a dent on your paycheck. Of course, considering what you paid for that Mac Book Pro, it's only wise to invest in a nice case to lug it around in.

We scoured the Net for some styles you can choose from (www.markaonline.com, www.myrebe.com, www.getbirdinhand.com, www.kolobags.com, www.abinewyork.com). Oh, did we mention some local bag makers offer custom services? (Wink, Wink.)

Now get down on it and we'll get off your case!

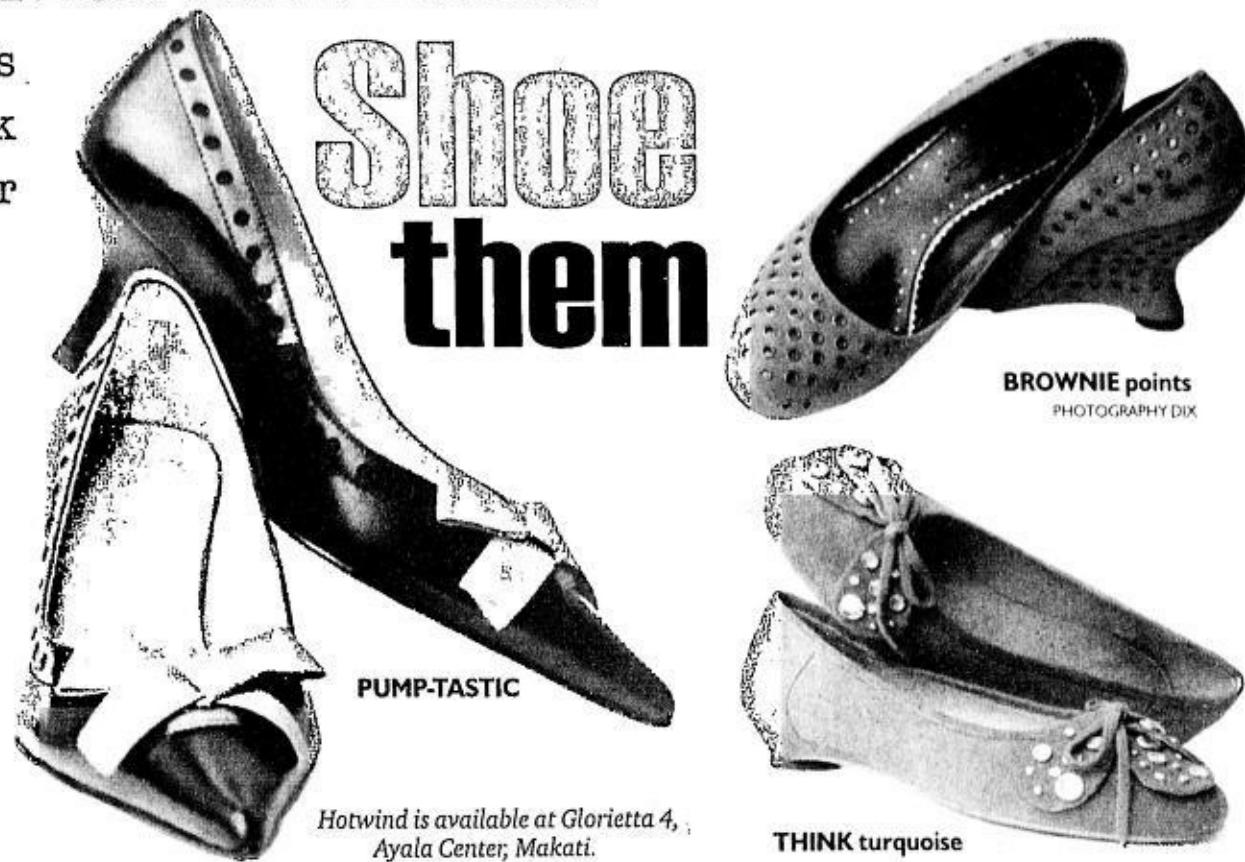
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Contributing Editor Ria Francisco-Prieto

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

BEAUTY

Look good, be good

We spend more time at work than at home or out partying, so proper grooming does go a long way

I'M IN AN INTERNET CAFÉ AT 7 a.m., writing the article I have to e-mail in a few hours so I could beat my deadline.

Earlier, I literally rolled out of bed, looked for sweats and didn't have much luck. I ended up mismatching, but figured no one knew me here anyway so it should be okay.

At the moment, I am across the Soho hotel my husband and I are staying in and I am freezing. I am a bit spaced out and just checking out some people coming in to get their morning caffeine fix.

If there is one thing that actually says how important or successful a person is in his or her line of work, it would be how presentable he or she is.

So as I am trying to concentrate on the story I'm writing and checking out people at the same time, I realize how important good grooming is in the work place. Or, actually, in any place, since I'm noticing that people enter-

ing just seem to glance at me. Now I know how much of a homeless person I look.

I believe if you are happy in your job, you are compelled to dress better. Work can be the best place for you when you enjoy what you are doing and love the people you work with. At the very least, the more dressed and well groomed you are, the more people will take you seriously and the more viable you become for that promotion.

We spend more time at work than at home or out partying, so good grooming does go a long way. It is easy and takes less than 10 minutes.

Tie your hair if you don't have time to blow-dry it. If you've not had enough sleep, use a concealer. Brush on some blush and swipe on your favorite shade of lippie.

You don't always have to put eye shadow. Sometimes curling your lashes and adding mascara are enough. Make sure your nails



Ria Francisco-Prieto

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are clean and then spray on a lovely scent. Celebrate yourself and make sure you look good. You want to be presentable, and people are drawn to good-looking people, anyway—which is actually anybody and everybody who is well-kept.

That can surely be you. I should know. I honestly wish I took a few more extra minutes to look for my matching jump suit, tie my hair and put on some blush and lipstick. As it is, even if I'm in a café where no one knows me, I feel unworthy of writing this article. Though I feel I should, too, since at the moment I am reporting from the other end of the spectrum, and I'm not enjoying it.

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Enhanced skin-brightening products

MOST ASIAN WOMEN want fair skin and their reason may be frowned upon as racism, but they are right: Fair skin will keep them looking young long-term.

Whitening or brightening products actually reverses skin damage and boosts skin immunities, making skin healthy and strong. When you think about it, our skin achieved its best condition when we were babies. It was even-toned all over; the lighter it was, the higher the moisture. It was also stronger then, as our scratches healed fast.

Did you notice that when we were children, when we went to the beach, our tan faded really fast compared with the latter years? That was because of the skin's ability to heal itself due to a very efficient immune system.

The whitening products sold over the counter aim to get back your even-toned baby skin, making it perhaps a little lighter. Their main purpose is to eliminate damage and discoloration like freckles, age spots and post-pimple dark or red marks to leave your skin clear and even.

For huge discoloration caused by

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menopause or pregnancy, I would suggest strong products under a doctor's supervision such as the Obagi Nu Derm program. It really does work the fastest and yields dramatic results.

But the program may yield disastrous results when you are lax about it, hence the doctor's supervision. It's the only one I know that actually erases all the stubborn freckles.

Very noticeable results.

Brightening brands have intensified their formulas so that very noticeable results are seen in a week or less. The fastest to fade are of course pimple marks, and the longest to disappear are age spots.

The basic step is, of course, cleanser, toner, essence/serum (the most crucial product) and day cream with SPF and whitening

night cream.

The following brands take into account the skin type; they have a specialized toner and even cleanser:

Lancôme Blanc Expert Neurowhite, Estée Lauder Cyberwhite, Shu Uemura White Recovery EX (made even more potent), and Clinique Dermawhite, which has the most extensive and, shall I say, complicated steps that will thrill the whitening fanatic!

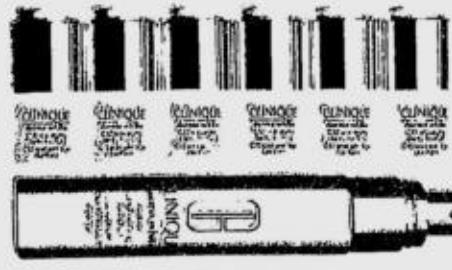
I still use my Pure Focus cleanser and toner to mop up my oily face because the Lancôme Toning Lotion 1 does not do it for me.

Lancôme, Estée and Shu have made their essences more potent. I see results in overall skin lightening just a day after using them.

People even remark that my skin has become very white. The product has also broken up pigmentation on my menopausal test subjects aged 50 and above!

Clinique has added many enhancements in its line. I like the C10 anti-aging clarity formula and the gel mask with activator spray that leaves skin feeling like satin and looking like porcelain.

On whitening boosters for evening use, there are now treatments that are applied straight for a period to exfoliate and boost the brightening action to achieve glowing, even skin that is foundation-free.



notice that I neglect my shoulders, arms and nape when it comes to sun protection. Applying this resulted in my nape not only getting lighter but having a better texture than the skin on my face. For the daytime, I go crazy over the SPF 50++ sunblock that is sweat- and water-resistant. It soothes any inflammation, has a matte finish and blurs the skin's minor imperfections. Its peel-off spot corrector is also a godsend since it fades marks dramatically.

3) Elizabeth Arden's Sheer White Pure Intensive Capsules (P3,450) and Serum (P4,200) are the same thing but in different delivery systems. I use it on my eye area and I notice a firming and a reduction in inflammation.

I have more products in the brightening arena so do not expect this to be the last feature. The rest are currently being tested. They come in different price ranges for everyone's budget. Stay tuned!

For damaged skin

Those with sun-damaged and weakened skin will see the results fastest. My favorites: 1) Clarins White Plus skin renew and whitening concentrate. It is applied every night after cleansing and toning for three weeks straight, to be used alone and with no other treatment except eye cream.

It is intended to prep up the skin for the changes of season every three months. In the Philippines, every six months should be sufficient to boost the skin as we do not have radical changes in climate. I tested this on my neck; I dare say my neck is even slightly lighter in shade.

2) Guerlain Perfect white C Ultra Concentrated whitening treatment for evenings is responsible for my lighter-colored nape as well. I

Spa opens branch in Ortigas

BODY TUNE THE TRADITIONAL Thai Massage, the original spa-in-a-mall, has opened a branch at the SM Megamall.

Body Tune offers at the new branch the Xiamen foot massage, a 90-minute treatment that comes with either back- or full-body massage.

The Xiamen foot massage reportedly helps improve blood circulation; relieves rheumatism, athlete's foot, influenza and similar ailments; improves metabolism; relieves insomnia and fatigue; strengthens body organs; relieves pain caused by diabetes, headaches, gastritis, neurasthenia, high blood pressure, stiff neck, leg cramps, back pains; and relieves stress.

The Xiamen foot massage comes with an herbal foot soak and a foot scrub.

Also being offered at the Body Tune SM Megamall branch is the Balinese massage, an oil-based treatment from Indonesia to ease muscle and joint pain.

Body Tune, which specializes in the traditional Thai massage which does not use oil, offers a full menu of spa services like Sparoma- aromatherapy, volcanic stone, Swedish, shiatsu, holistic, which is a combination of Swedish and shiatsu, twin, cellulite, Thai foot, hand, chair,



BODY Tune has a number of body treatments like Dead Sea salt scrub, seaweed body scrub, honey body polish, body moor mud wrap, seaweed moor mud wrap and oatmeal nourishing buff.

and chair with scalp.

It also has a number of body treatments like granular two-in-one scrub massage, Dead Sea

salt scrub, seaweed body scrub, honey body polish, body moor mud wrap, body bleaching, underarm whitening, whitening scrub, seaweed moor mud wrap, and oatmeal nourishing buff.

Also available are facial treatments like the aroma facial massage, facial scrub with mask and non-surgical facelift. It also offers hand and foot care services like spa manicure, spa pedicure, foot spa, manicure, and pedicure.

Body Tune has branches at SM City North Edsa, SM City Biñan, SM City Bacoor, SM City Baguio, SM City Dasmariñas, SM City Batangas, SM City South Mall, SM City Pampanga, SM City Marilao, SM City Fairview, SM City Cebu, SM City Sucat, SM Mall of Asia, Market! Market! and Batangas City.



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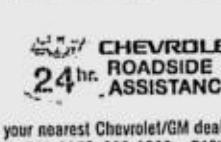
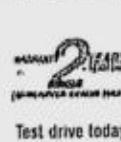
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Kris, Boy praise the Xändo™ weight loss science

When the local queen and king of talk Kris Aquino and Boy Abunda first heard of the breakthrough science of Xändo weight loss tablets, they were more than eager to try it.

Xändo tablet is the all-natural, clinically proven solution for the simple, comfortable and effective weight loss that has let thousands of Europeans and Asians keep in top shape. It has a patented formula tailored for the modern, busy lifestyle, making it the perfect dietary product for Kris and Boy.

Developed by the leading European weight management expert Nils Mortensen, Xändo effectively reduces weight by safely blocking calories from carbohydrates, starch and sugar by the digestive tract, and by burning stored, unwanted fat.

Known to have discerning tastes, Kris and Boy use the best products available. Hence, when it comes to maintaining weight, they only use Xändo tablets.

More than a weight loss tablet, Xändo for them is the solution to lasting weight control. "What sets Xändo apart from other dietary products is the revolutionary science behind it," Boy declares.

In a European study conducted by Dr. Erling Thom, a noted European researcher on weight management, it revealed that people who are using Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than diet alone and 85% of weight lost is body fat.

The results are supported by Roald Strand, a leading Singaporean weight control expert, who subjected Xändo tablets to various clinical trials. In Strand's studies, the results were the consistent—people using Xändo tablets showed three times more weight loss and 85% of weight lost was body fat.

Aside from being effective, Xändo is safe to use. "Unlike other dietary pills, Xändo is 100% natural—it's caffeine- and laxative-free—so you can be assured that there are no side effects," Kris points out.

Boy immediately adds how Xändo guarantees product safety. "If Xändo users have not experienced any change in their weight in 90 days, Xändo will gladly give them a refund based on a prior agreement. That's how confident Xändo is that it's safe and effective."

Kris and Boy are positive that they will stay in shape no matter how busy they'll be in the future, as long as they are using Xändo. "Xändo keeps us in top shape. It's proven safe and effective," attests Kris. To this, Boy gleefully adds "We've finally found the answer to maintaining our weight!" as he smiled at his best friend.

Xändo has taken Europe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia by storm. It has been proven safe and effective by various independent lab studies. Simply take 1 to 2 tablets before each meal to begin the Xändo slimming action.

Xändo is exclusively available at all Watsons outlets. For more information, please call the Xändo HealthLines 727-9999 and 0922-88-XANDO (92636).



Xändo's dynamic duo, Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino sign up as Xändo tablet's endorsers. Present during the signing are (1st-2nd row, L-R) Perfecto President Wilfred Chua, Manager Dandan Monteverde, Perfecto Director Romeo Que, Masterminds-Asia Communications President Sunny Ku and Perfecto Director Robert Tanchip. Perfecto is the exclusive distributor of Xändo tablets in the country.

European research proves

3X more weight loss

Xändo™ makes losing and maintaining weight so much easier. I love using Xändo™

Boy Abunda
Award-winning TV host / PR maven

I'm glad I have Xändo™ to comfortably lose weight and keep me in shape.

Kris Aquino
Award-winning actress / TV host

Singapore's Award-Winning Dietary Tablet

BlockBurn Tablets

NO APPROVED THERAPEUTIC CLAIM

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• A published clinical study shows that Xändo™ tablets together with a diet of 1200Kcal give significantly larger (3 times more) weight reduction than dieting alone. 85% weight lost is body fat.

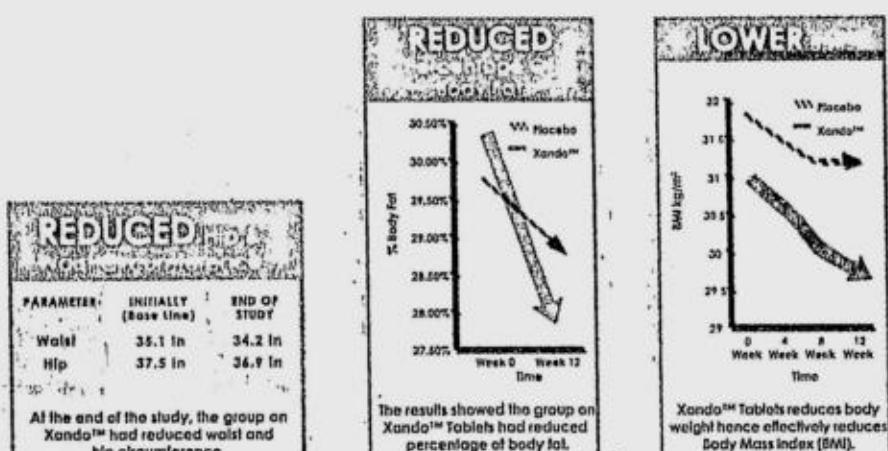
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Body Weight

Reference: E. Thom J Int Med Res 2000: 28:227-233.

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Reference: E. Thom J Int Med Res 2000: 28:227-233.

A clinical study published in the International Journal of Medical Research revealed that people using Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than dieting alone, according to Dr. Erling Thom, one of the leading European researchers in weight management.



Dr. Thom, an accomplished researcher who has published over 10 academic papers on weight management, also said that the clinical trial showed that 85% of weight lost was body fat.

Dr. Thom discussed the results of the clinical trial in line with other new developments in effective weight control. "We took a group of overweight people and divided them into two test groups. The groups were balanced in terms of weight and age to ensure they were comparable," Dr. Thom narrated. "Both groups were placed on a 1200Kcal diet. One was given Xändo tablets while the other was given tablets with no active ingredients."

"The results showed the group on the Xändo tablets lost three times more weight than the other group. The placebo group lost an average of 1.2 kg while the group on the Xändo tablets lost 3.5 kg," recounted Dr. Thom.

"We then looked at where the weight loss came from. It is important that healthy weight loss be predominantly from fat, not muscle tissue. For the group using Xändo tablets, 85% of their weight loss was fat loss," explained Dr. Thom.

Xändo tablets inventor Mr. Nils Mortensen was pleased to hear the results of the study. "The reason I invented Xändo was to help people lose weight safely," he said.



Nils Mortensen

INT'L LAB STUDIES PROVE XÄNDÖ TO BE SAFE

Xändo, the revolutionary weight loss tablet that has taken European countries and Singapore by storm, has been comprehensively tested by various independent lab studies and proven to be safe and effective.



No micro-contaminants and harmful elements found

After thorough clinical trials, an independent laboratory study made in France has concluded that Xändo tablet is free from harmful elements. Another independent Singaporean study revealed that Xändo does not contain adulterants or common poisons. A similar study also done in Singapore showed after exhaustive clinical trials that there were no micro-contaminants found in Xändo.

100% natural

The results of independent lab studies also proved that Xändo safely sheds and prevents unwanted fat buildup.

Developed by the leading European researcher on weight management Mr. Nils Mortensen, Xändo contains all natural extracts that make up Xändo's patented formula. According to Mr. Mortensen, Xändo's all-natural formula works by blocking excess carbohydrates from food such as pasta, rice and noodles and 'small' carbohydrates from food like pastries, cakes and chocolates, and preventing excess carbohydrates from being converted to body fat, thereby thwarting further weight gain.

Caffeine and laxative-free

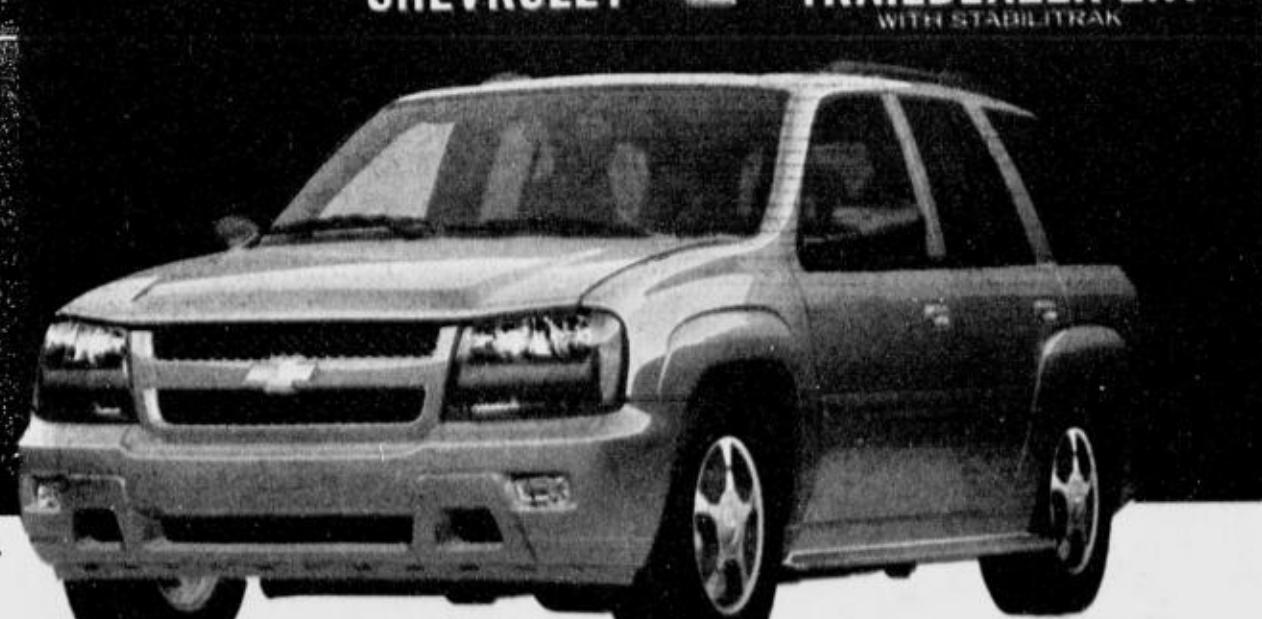
Unlike other weight loss products, Xändo does not contain caffeine and laxative that will leave users feeling uncomfortable. Now Filipinos can enjoy Xändo's safe slimming action that has been enjoyed throughout Europe and Asia by simply taking one to two tablets before each meal.



Xändo™ partners with Watsons

Perfecto President Wilfred Chua (second from left) and Watsons General Manager Andrew Derby (third from left) seal the deal of Watsons' exclusive distribution of Xändo tablets in the country, as Perfecto General Manager Niña Locap (first from left) and Watsons Merchandise Controller in Health Division, Earl Stanley Perez (fourth from left) look on.

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Exciting beauty issue

BEAUTY
LIFESTYLE

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2006

BECAUSE WOMEN DESERVE ONLY THE best, Marie Claire magazine recently presented the winners of the Prix d'Excellence de la Beauté 2006, a prestigious award given to the nine best cosmetic

products in the world. In its May issue, Marie Claire surveys men on four very different makeup looks, ranging from none-at-all to sexy and smoldering, to let women in on what the opposite sex really

thinks of your makeup. Beauty editors all over the world also reveal their fool-proof beauty secrets in this month's "Global Beauty." And finally, Marie Claire shows readers how to take the most exciting makeup styles

from this season's runways and use them in real life. Grab your copy of Marie Claire's May issue featuring Jennifer Garner on the cover, now available in magazine stands and bookstores at P125 per copy.

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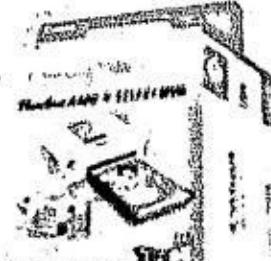
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LIFE *STYLED*

No need to be alarmed about 'whitening'

LAST WEEK'S NEWS about the bad effects of whitening cream on some users in Asia shouldn't really disturb you if you have been sticking to reputable brands.

I hardly know anyone now who doesn't use or hasn't tried using whitening products. Even a few men I know use or have tried a whitening product; still some are at least open to using it.

To be safe, keep in mind that you must use only reputable brands. Don't experiment with cheap products that flood the market; chances are they're bleaching agents which are, you must know, harmful to your skin.

Most of the reliable brands have vitamin or natural extracts such as licorice. Others have hy-

droquinone and tretinoin that fight skin discoloration and melanin production; they're all right at a small dosage. (The breakdown of ingredients and their effects is in Metro's June issue.) Even if you use your whitening cream/toner/sunblock routinely, take time to read the ingredients.

As we've said often, whitening products aren't supposed to bleach you; they're supposed to even out the color of your skin, revitalize the cells and thus give you that healthy glow.

Most important, keep in mind that you can't go under the sun for too long and not have blotches or sun spots, especially when you're using whitening products.

NO NEED/E2

LIFE-
STYLEDThelma Sioson
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To be safe, keep in mind that you must use only reputable brands.

Don't experiment with cheap products

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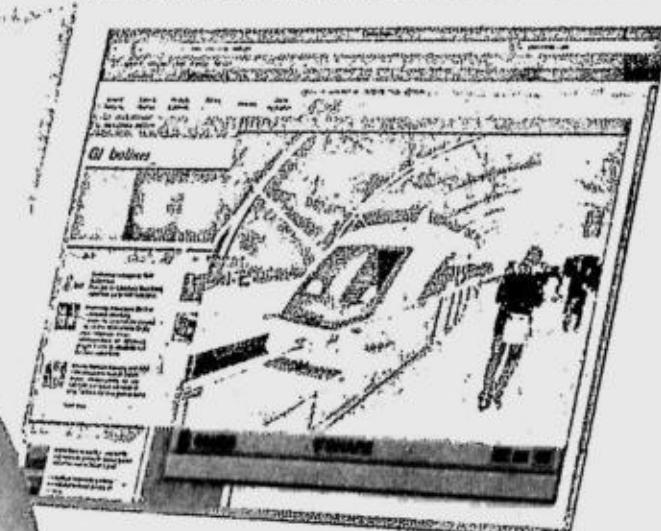
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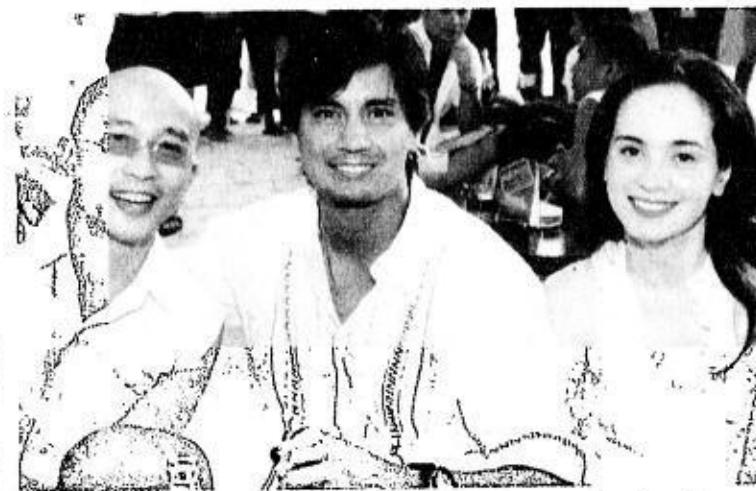
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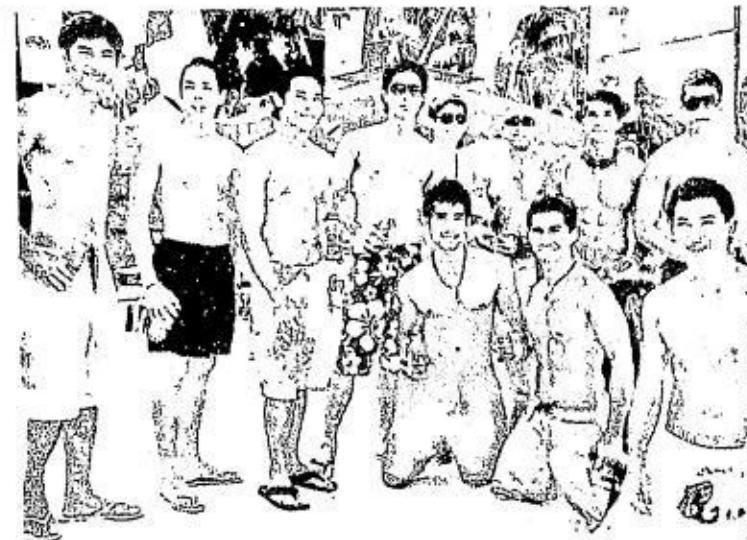
ARIEL Comia of Century Tuna's ad agency, Pitargue, Comia and Villaruel Communications, with beautiful couple Richard Gomez and Lucy Torres-Gomez; at left, happy twosome, Century Tuna's hotshot EVP/COO Ricardo Po and head-turner Tricia Panlilio



TOP model Raya Mananquil

HIP couple, Cinderella's Marielle Santos and Century Tuna executive Leo Po

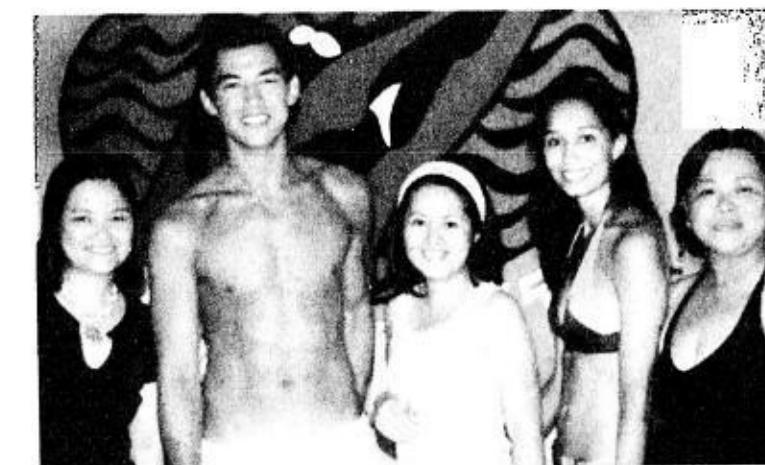
Hot fest of beaches and bodies



SUPERBODS Beach Fest hunks



GORGEOUS female finalists



WINNERS Jon Mullally (second from left) and Michelle Padua (second from right) with Ayeth Evangelista, Ginger Borja and Gigi Angkaw, all from Century Tuna



MAX'S good-looking Jim Fuentebella; CJ Jesena, senior division manager, Ayala Land; Ronald Pineda of Folded & Hung; Jayjay Onrubia; Schu's Ruby Gan; and fashion designer Randy Ortiz



WINE LOVERS. Zelly Tan; Anne Marie Sagui; Vince Tan, EVP Ayala Land; and businessman Loi Sagui



ANDREI Wisniewski and brother Martin of Museum Café

CENTURY TUNA CONDUCTED A COLOSSAL search for its next image models with the "Century Tuna Superbods Beach Fest" in Boracay, where you could find perfectly chiseled hunks and gals just everywhere, *palanggas*.

The country's leading canned tuna brand definitely knew how to hold an awesome "search to end all searches." It gave away a cool P1 million in cash prizes to the next hottest male and female models who would appear on Century Tuna's TV commercials, print ads, billboards and posters. The brand's hotshot executives—Joseph Pineda, Leo Po, Ayeth Evangelista and Gigi Angkaw—transformed Bora's Pier One into one huge party place. Around 55 young hunks and gorgeous women tried their luck to become the next Century Tuna models who must personify the Century Tuna profile: a great body, glowing skin and a healthy lifestyle, *palanggas*.

Emceeing the event were TV host JM Rodriguez and hot model Bianca Valerio. It opened with the contestants parading their hot bodies before the judges, such as Ariel Comia, VP-creative director of Century Tuna's ad agency, Pitargue, Comia & Villaruel Communications; talent manager Douglas Quijano; former Century Tuna image model, my *palangga*, gorgeous Phoemela Barranda; "Us Girls" host Angel Aquino; model Raya Mananquil; "MTV Bling" host Tim Yap; society photographer Alex van Hagen; actor-TV host Richard Gomez and "Shall We Dance" hostess Lucy Torres-Gomez; and Century Tuna marketing manager Ayeth Evangelista.

The group was pared down to 16 finalists, who had to show their wit in answering the challenging questions from the tough judges.

The winners were Fil-Am beauty Michelle Padua and drop-dead half-British, half-Pinoy heartthrob Jon Mullally. They deposited in their accounts a cool half a million pesos each and a one-year modeling contract with Century Tuna, natch!

First runners-up were Grant Hooks and Elaine Gallardo, while second runners-up were Chris Samson and Danielle Piolo.

Before the grand competition night, celebs, models, top personalities and invitees dashed over to the Century Tuna Superbods event where they were treated to free massage, hair braiding and henna tattoo. They also got to show off their athletic side in the beach games, aero boxing and taebo session.

Chilling it were adorable fitness gal Chinggay Andrade; architect Victor Consunji; handsome Geoff Rodriguez; vivacious TV personality Jackie Castillo; international model Teresa Herrera, Century Tuna poster boy Will Devaughn; PDI's Just Shop editor Jenni Epperson; statuesque Tricia Panlilio with her three handsome sons, Quintin, Matteo and adorable Luca Cu-Unjieng; Socky Pitargue; "it" girl CJ Arabata; and Rachel Lobangco, who did a wild fire dance with the Boracay Dragon Dancers.

Then it was time to rock and roll, *palanggas*. Rocking the dance floor of Pier One to fantastic party sounds were guest DJs, PR wonder boy GP Reyes and Karl of Superfly, no less, dahlings.

Now, how do you truly bring the sizzling temperature down in a bash like the Superbods beach fest? Easy, give away cool raffle prizes such as Motorola Razr V31 cell phones, Canon digital cameras, iPod Shuffle and Nano, Havaianas, and P5,000 cash.

Now you know why Century Tuna is always in my list of buys. After all, Sunday at my house is not complete without our Salade Nicoise for dinner, using Century Tuna, of course.

Check out Century Tuna's Choice Tuna Fillet. It will blow your socks off, *palanggas*! Yummy.

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Check out Century Tuna's Choice Tuna Fillet. It will blow

LIFESTYLE

Time for an Angel

By Bernadette Joy Lopez
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

YOUNG STAR ANGEL LOCSIN went out of her way just to see her Timex billboard on one of the major thoroughfares in the city.

"I even paid the toll fee just to see the billboard," she shares. "I've been waiting for the ads to come out for the longest time."

It's easy to understand Locsin's excitement over her role as the newest Timex endorser alongside award-winning actor and the brand's perennial favorite Piolo Pascual.

The sleek, futuristic, edgy and sexy Timex "What's Next" campaign proves worthy of a detour, with shades of steel and blue tempering the fiery reds and steamy gazes, making

one wonder how the images manage to be hot and cool at the same time.

The ads, shot by celebrity photographer Xander Angeles, lure viewers to read between the lines and think "what's next?"

"It's like shooting a mini-movie," Angeles says. "There's a story behind each photo." His wife Cheryl handled the campaign's set and costume production for the three-day shoot.

Practical

Only Timex has successfully staged what's dubbed as a "casting coup," the Herculean task of putting together two of the biggest stars from rival networks into one major advertising campaign. It's also only in the Philippines that Timex uses celebrity endorsers.

Both endorsers staunchly believe in the importance of wearing a watch, not only for "pormo" (as Locsin puts it), but also for more practical purposes.

"Given my lifestyle it's really important to be fully aware of the time, and often I'm confused about what day it is," says Locsin, referring to her hectic schedule that often leaves her confused about dates. Her favorite Timex watch is the simple yet elegant Perpetual Calendar, which accurately keeps track of the date.

Locsin isn't the only celebrity who wears a watch for practical reasons. "When you're always on the go," Pascual says, "whenever you check your time you can actually organize your schedule, your day pretty well."

To Pascual, a watch is a status symbol. "[A watch] reflects what kind of a person you are, your social status and at the same time your character," he says. "It speaks a lot about you."

He first saw a Timex watch when he was barely 9 years old, he shares. His mother gifted him with a Timex, and the first thing that came to his mind was that it's "pang-maya-man."

Comfort

Since watches reveal far more than just the time, the endorsers offer a number of tips for those keen, but clueless, on buying a watch.

"Go for comfort. Go for what can reflect your personality," Pascual says. "If you have



ANGEL Locsin and Piolo Pascual share tips on buying and caring for timepieces.

the money, of course you can choose different watches for different occasions, but if you're practical you'd want to choose something you can wear with anything."

His favorite watch, the top-of-the-line Automatic, can be worn with formal slacks or with jeans. "I like wearing it because anything matches it," he says. "And it's expensive!"

Locsin, who prefers big square watches, is on the same wavelength as her new leading man.

"When you're just starting your watch collection, buy something that goes with anything," she says. "A watch with a white strap fits in well with any casual outfit."

"For formal occasions, buy a watch with a thin silver strap," she adds. To Locsin, these two watches are the classic pieces for those on a budget.

Those who intend to collect watches will delight in the many styles and designs Timex

offers. As the veteran endorser Pascual puts it, "Timex has the right model, the right design for every occasion."

Locsin has about 20-30 Timex watches. What about her other watches? "I don't use them anymore," she assures.

Pascual, meanwhile, says he has retired his non-Timex watches by returning them to their boxes. "All the watches in my drawer are all Timex. I don't go out on occasions without wearing a Timex," he reveals.

Pascual, on his fourth stint for Timex, brushes off the idea that Timex cemented its market leadership in the Philippines because of his endorsement.

"Anyone can wear it—anyone wears it, anyway," he says, in reference to Timex topping the surveys as the top watch brand in the country for the past five years. "I think the most important thing is that anyone can afford it—any class, any person."

Angel Locsin is the newest Timex endorser alongside award-winning actor and the brand's perennial favorite Piolo Pascual



THE TWO biggest stars of the two biggest networks team up for one explosive Timex "What's Next?" campaign.

No need to be alarmed about 'whitening'

From page E2

I myself have learned it the hard way. You can't have too much sun and whitening product. In short, you can't have your cake and eat it too.

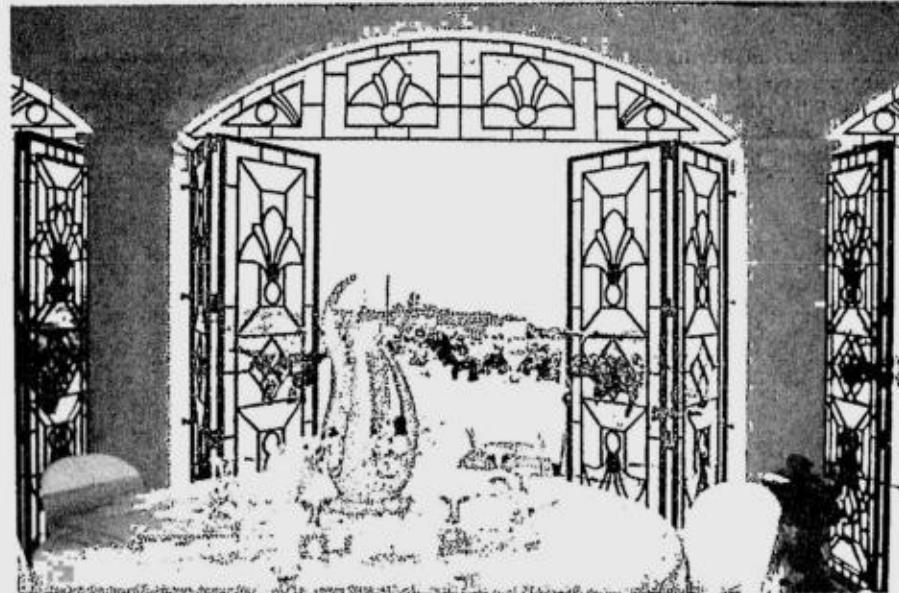
This explains why many women, even the very young ones, have brown spots no matter how smooth their skin. This is because they're not careful enough to avoid sun overexposure.

Revisiting Deedee

It was a happy-sad feeling visiting journalist and former President Cory Aquino spokesperson Deedee Siytangco in her weekend home in Tagaytay. Happy because I remembered the fun laidback afternoons of old there. And sad because Deedee's husband and soulmate, Sonny, is no longer around.

Sonny died of pancreatic cancer last November. Deedee is nowhere near getting over him. That much we felt when we visited Deedee recently here. Sonny remains so much a part of their Tagaytay home, as he is of Deedee's and their children's lives.

The house is on a ridge with a breathtaking view of Taal Lake, the sky and the greenscape. Inside, Deedee can sit on the bed of the master's bedroom and go over one photo album after another of the family, particularly of Sonny with the kids.



BELLA Vista

There's a photo of an exuberant Sonny, with the youngest AJ (a young man already) lying flat on his stomach, on Sonny's lap, with Sonny's hand raised as if to spank him.

It's a "birthday ritual," Deedee told us. Sonny would playfully do that to his kid every birthday, no matter how big (literally) and grown up his sons had become.

A few steps beyond the room is the balcony looking down on the sloping garden and beyond it, the Tagaytay panorama. On the rail here, Deedee recalled, Sonny and she would hang their towels to dry every morning. Shortly after Sonny's death, Deedee forgot to hang hers, only to find it later, out hanging on the balcony rail. To this day Deedee be-



DEEDEE Siytangco with son David, who runs Bella Vista.

lieves that was Sonny's way of greeting her from beyond.

Shortly before he died, Sonny and Deedee agreed that since the house and garden have ample space, they would open their weekend home to private functions. They called their house "Bella Vista."

Today Deedee is fulfilling that agreement. The Siytangcos have opened their weekend home to select private func-

tions and private caterer friends led by Glenda Barreto.

Deedee has also engaged the catering services of old family friends and "suki" caterers, Andrew and Connie Pacumio, president of Town's Delight in Cavite.

Andrew specializes in very interesting Cavite dishes such as Cavite adobo of pork belly and quail eggs, and Lihim ni Aguinaldo dessert. The range covers the popular local dishes, from chicken galantina to lengua. There are menus to choose from for debuts and small weddings. (For details, call Sandee Masiang, tel. 0920-9030840.)

Deedee and her children are getting their routine back, after a loss in the family. But Deedee draws some happiness from AJ's insight about the richness of his parents' 39-year marriage.

"Look at it as a long-running TV series that's bound to end sometime," he told his mom, "but you had the best, very rich season."

It's a bit of good news that our friend Ethel Timbol is done with her surgery and is out of the hospital. Hopefully, she will be back in the lifestyle circle soon.

An interesting bit of news is that Lia Bernardo, Metro Society editor and corporate consultant, is not only into meditation, but is also into healing.



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CrownAsia elegantly signs a new name across the blue skies of Sta. Rosa

Hundreds of genius hours are spent before CrownAsia proclaims a new site as a "signature project." Such is the case with Valenza, Sta. Rosa.

Significant intercity locations. CrownAsia homeowners are self-made success stories. They need to live, work and play near business and productivity centers. Sta. Rosa is exactly this. Major world names in industry are positioned for their regional production, spawning a new town of technical and managerial stars.



Outstanding site development themes. CrownAsia signature homes lean heavily on Italian elan to distinguish each project look from all others around the area.

Value-for-money technical excellence. The consultants, architects and engineers of CrownAsia labor to put more sense and save cents in each aspect of development. Space-saving features, practical technical specs allow CrownAsia to plow back savings into making signature projects outpace competition.



Sta. Rosa. The new boomtown of the upwardly mobile self-made success stories. It's Southward Ho! New creative business minds are making the move away from the traditional Metro Manila central business districts to Sta. Rosa. With eyes set on enterprise opportunities in the growing population of Sta. Rosa and the increasing visitor critical mass of Tagaytay, the population of young investor entrepreneurs is steadily increasing. Valenza will provide the perfect home for this bright-eyed class of aggressive achievers.



CrownAsia Signature Homes are stand outs, wherever the new silk flags fly to herald a new project.



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Valenza is beautifully nestled in between cool Tagaytay and the blossoming town of Sta. Rosa. Shopping, entertainment and dining are only 5 minutes away from its gates. Alabang, a quick zip down the SLEX.

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3 Super Sulit Deals

It's never a rip off to shop in Abenson. Its prices are equally competitive in the market. More than that, aside from the product you take home, the service and assurance you get is surely worth every penny.

**Best
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continued on page 2

SONY

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Sony's latest range of DVD Handycam models combine the best of 5.1ch Surround Sound with stunning picture quality and the convenience of DVD format recording. Record sounds from every direction while shooting your video and capture them in 5.1ch Surround Sound. Playing back when you instantly playback and share on your 5.1ch surround home theatre system, it's like being there all over again.



Sony's latest range of DVD Handycam models

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DVD805

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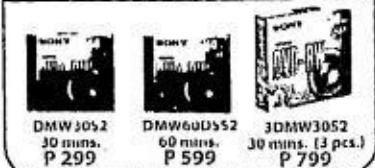
*DVD605 & DVD705 are not equipped with Dolby Digital 5.1 Creator Surround Sound recording function.

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TOP 10 CONTINUED..

4

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5

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A wide variety of items await loyal customers, from flat irons to digital cameras. Not only that, these loyal customers get special privileges in promos and special events. This rewards program is just a simple gesture to remind them how much Abenson values its customers.

6

Great Giveaways & lots of freebies

Abenson understands value for money. That's why it always comes up with special programs to make sure that customers get more for what they pay. From instant giveaways to big raffle promos, Abenson makes sure customers leave the store smiling and not feeling robbed.

PHILIPS
Free 25" TV on LCDs 32" above
*each purchase only

Free cellphones on LCDs
*selected models only

*Free standfan or deskfan on aircons
*selected models only

Choice of payment options

For many years, Abenson has established strong ties with the country's major banks. So whether it's to give cardholders special privileges in major promos, special discounts, or 0% interest, installment, Abenson makes sure that these credit card holders are well attended to.

Corporate Sales Service

Abenson has serviced companies' needs for appliances. Whether it be furnishing the office with appliances, employee incentive programs or external consumer marketing needs, Abenson has provided solutions such as delivery and installation to implementing back-end processes for a number of corporate clients. For Abenson corporate sales, you can call 638-3407 or 747-5057.

9

Hassle-free

warranty up to 5 years



Apart from the usual manufacturer's warranty, Abenson offers extended warranty service which adds another year or two to your typical coverage. For as low as P3.00 a day, you can add more years of life to your appliance, giving more value to your investment.

10

On time home delivery

We want you to enjoy your appliances right away so we offer same day delivery, next day delivery and scheduled delivery service. You are assured that your appliances are delivered safely and promptly.

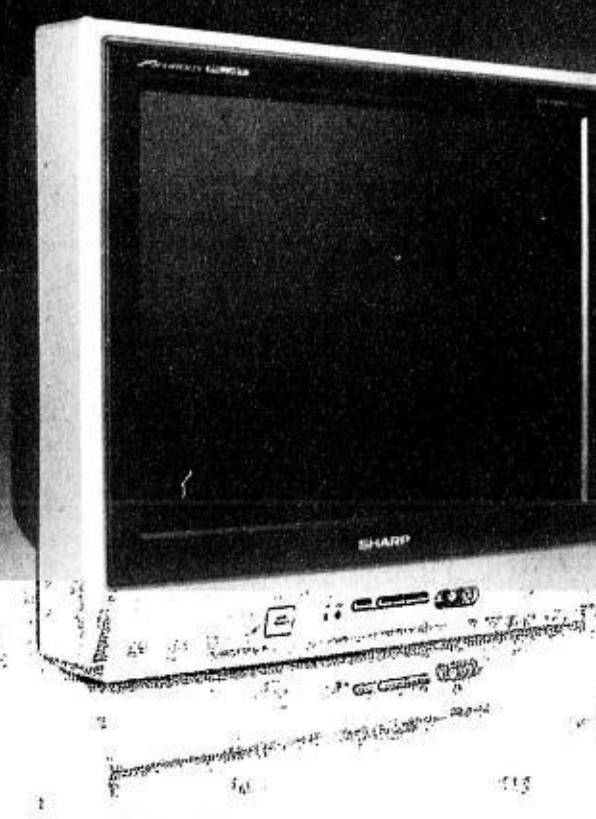
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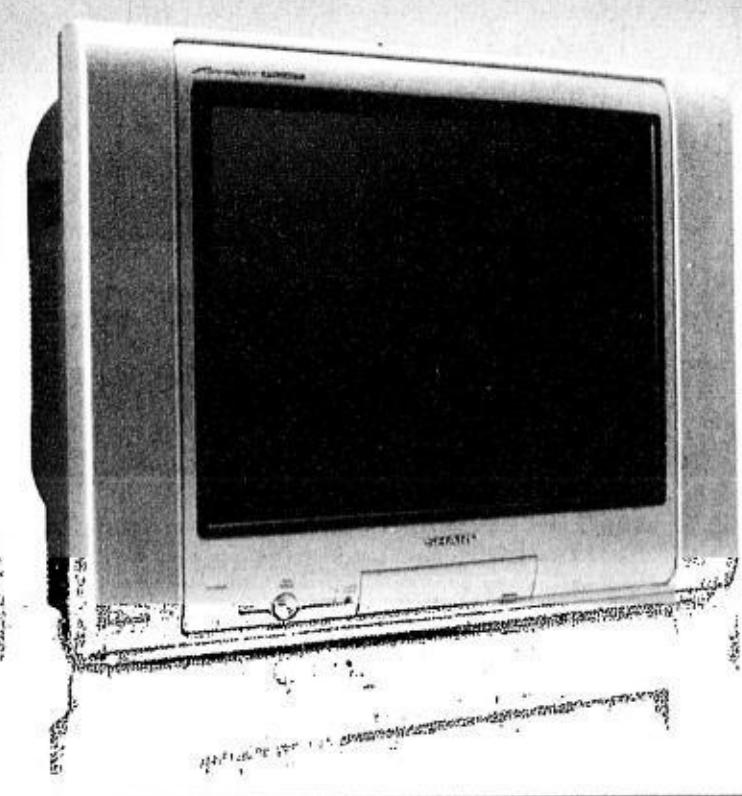
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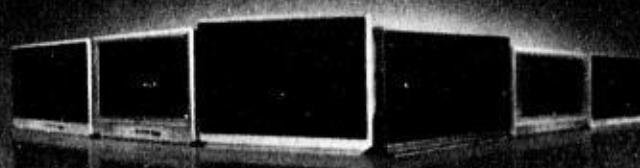
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Top things to consider when buying an appliance.

Refrigerator

Size- consider the demand of your family before you decide on the size of your refrigerator. Take note also of the amount of space you have in your kitchen before you buy a new refrigerator.

Defrost function- some refrigerators need not be defrosted manually. Automatic defrost will cost a little more but will make cleaning a lot easier.

Shelf space- make sure the shelf space of the refrigerators is at par with your requirements. You don't want a too big ref. or a too small ref, don't you?

Air-conditioner

Horsepower- this measures the cooling power of your unit.

EER- this measures how efficient your unit is in using energy. The higher the EER, the more efficient it is in energy consumption. Using an aircon may skyrocket your electric bill, so make sure you buy the more efficient ones.

Control function- manual, timer and remote are basically your options. Convenience comes with a price, so if you think you can forgo the remote to save a few thousand bucks, then it's definitely your call.

Video Camera/Digital Still Camera

Resolution- this measures how clear the picture will be. Think of special moments captured in quality.

Storage- this is a very important consideration in buying a camera. For videocams, you have a lot of options like hi8, minidv, DVD and hard disk storage all of which have its pros and cons. For digital cameras, storage capacity, measured in megabytes, will tell you just how much photos you can save.

Zoom function- in buying a camera, pay more attention to optical zoom than digital zoom. Zooming power will depend more on optical than digital.

continued on page 4.

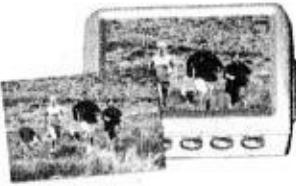


Canon

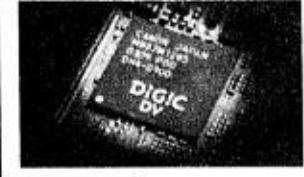
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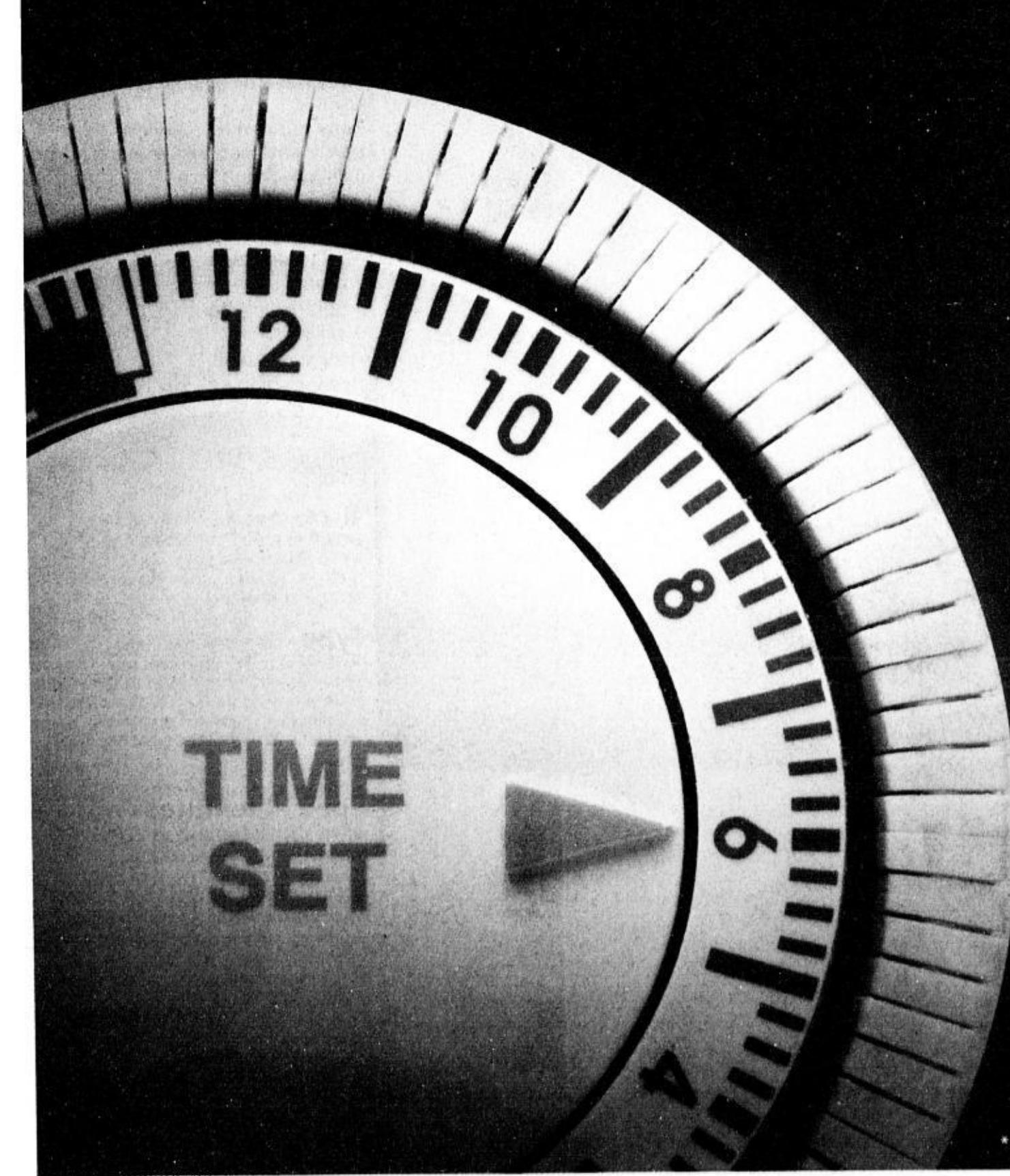


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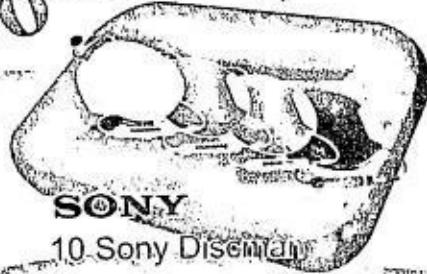
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SET**



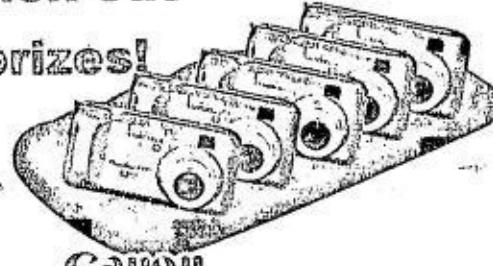
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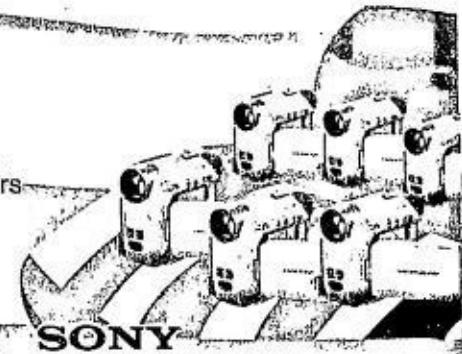
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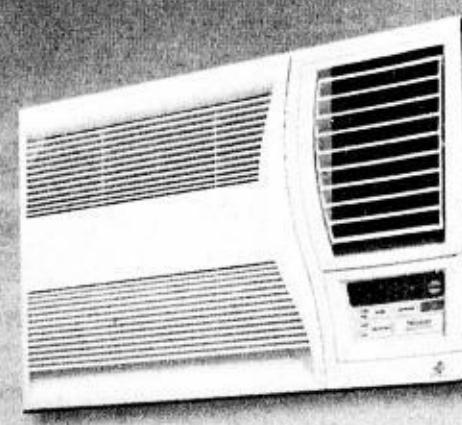


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Panasonic ideas for life

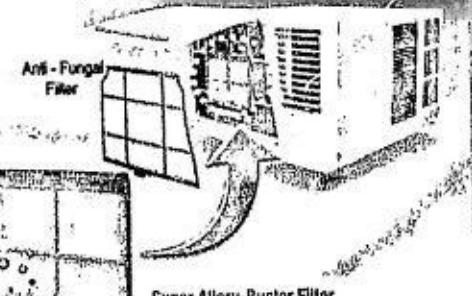
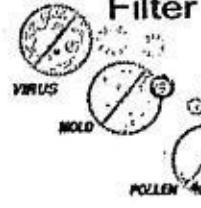


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Ronald Garcia
Edwin Ortega
Rufino Lizardo

Top things to
consider when buying
an appliance

Washing Machine

Capacity - the size of your family is a big factor to consider. For 3-5 members, a capacity of 3.5-6 kgs dry load capacity would be enough, while 7 kgs. capacity is just perfect for a big family.

Types

Single tub - most basic wash function.

Twin Tub - combination of one tub and spinner.

Fully automatic - performs three tasks: washing, rinsing and spinning all in a single tub.

other features - some added features you may want to look at are washing program, lint filter, drain, hose system and built in fabric softener dispenser.

TV Sets

Size - Who wouldn't want to watch in a 50" TV? Then again, extravagance always comes with a price, so the bigger the size the more expensive it is.

Type - conventional, flat, projection, LCD, and plasma. These technologies were made to take home entertainment a notch higher. Before you decide, make sure you understand what these technologies have to offer.

Special features

viewing angle, digital surround and PIP are just some of the special features you might want to look at. Wide viewing angle gives you clear picture whether you're right in front or on the side. Digital surround feature will help you boost that cinematic feel into your home entertainment feel.

PIP
(Picture
in Picture)
allows you
to watch
several channels all at once.